

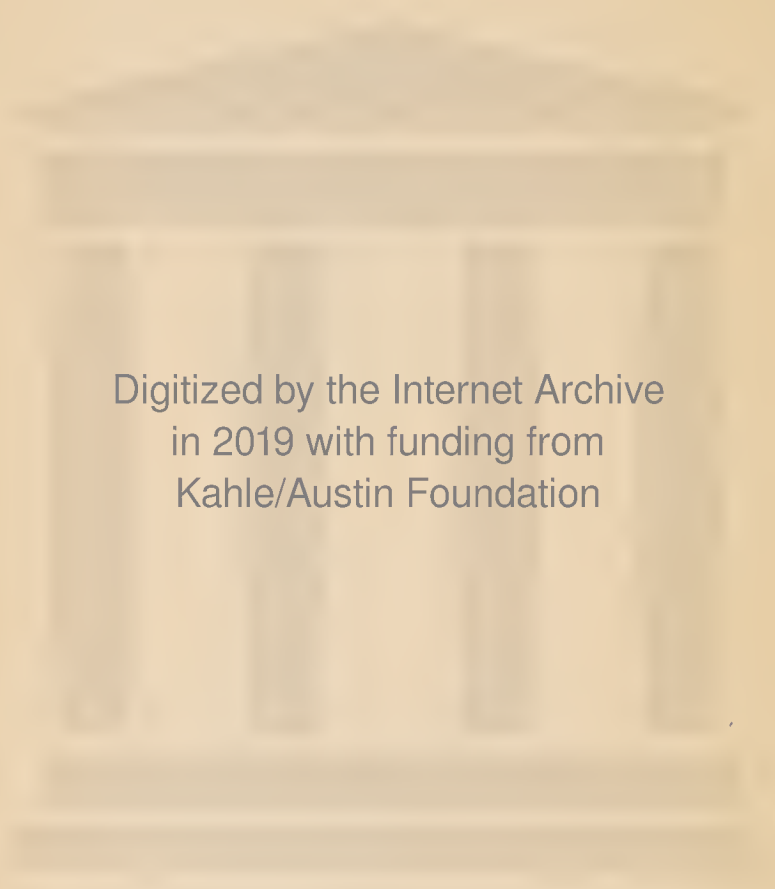
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*THE PUPPET
MASTER*

Books by
ROBERT NATHAN



AUTUMN: A novel

THE PUPPET
MASTER: A novel

JONAH: A novel

YOUTH GROWS
OLD: A book of verse

THE PUPPET
MASTER :: *by*
ROBERT NATHAN

ROBERT M. McBRIDE & COMPANY

NEW YORK :: :: :: :: :: 1925

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TO JOAN,
AND TO HER FRIENDS AND MINE,
ANABELLE LEE AND JANE DEMONSTRATION

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I

PAPA JONAS

PAPA JONAS lived on the ground floor of No. 12 Barrow Street. It was there he had his workshop, with its long table and its two dusty windows which looked down upon a garden owned by the church next door, and planted with geraniums and nasturtiums. At noon a shaft of sunlight entered the shop whose walls were hung with little dolls made of wood and dressed in silk and velvet.

They were the actors and actresses of the puppet theatre of which Papa Jonas was the owner and manager. Once a week you could have seen them presenting some play

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of Aristophanes, or Shakespeare, in a stable near Ninth Avenue. And you would have been astonished at their touching and life-like gestures. But in between performances they were content to hang limp and motionless from the wall at No. 12 Barrow Street, or sit stiffly and without speaking on the floor, while Papa Jonas changed the expression of Iago, or dressed Ophelia in the robes of the goddess Eirene.

Day after day, amid the odors of glue and new pine boards, Papa Jonas worked over these little creatures of wood, cloth, paper, and tinsel. There were any number of them, they filled the corners, they gazed from the walls with gay and mournful faces. Papa Jonas loved them all, and kept adding to them with anxious joy. But he confessed that he had certain favorites. His heart went out to an old Jew on whom he

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had been working for half a year. And he ventured the opinion that this puppet was his masterpiece.

"His face is full of suffering and ignorance," he said; "he almost seems to breathe."

There was also a clown with a long, red nose, of whom Papa Jonas was very fond. He had named him Mr. Aristotle, because he believed that to be a good clown it was necessary to be something of a philosopher. But he did not expect him, for that reason, to be very wise. "To be wise," Papa Jonas used to say, "it is necessary to see a great deal. One must look about; then one gets to know more than other people. Do not expect wisdom of a puppet; he has his nail in the wall, and that is all there is to it."

One reason why the puppet master felt a special fondness for Mr. Aristotle, was that

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the little clown reminded him of a time when he was poor, when he had been obliged to give plays like *The Adventures of Mr. Punch*, or *Jonah and The Whale*. Papa Jonas liked to think back to those days of his youth, with their longing, their enthusiasm, and their sadness. "Do you remember how hungry we were?" he used to ask Mr. Aristotle; "and will you ever forget the year we spent in Italy? The shiny blue sky, the cakes and wine . . . Yes, I can see that you are thinking of it."

Papa Jonas was no longer poor; he had enough for his needs, enough to allow him to present his plays with two assistants. Mrs. Holly, who lived with her daughter upstairs in the house on Barrow Street, recited the women's parts in a sweet and husky voice, while the young poet, Christopher Lane, changed the scenes, clicked on

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the electric lights, and raised and lowered the curtain. Mr. Lane also helped to dress the puppets, looked to the joints and wires, and even made minor repairs in the cloth or the paper.

The carving, however, Papa Jonas kept for himself, because it was the carving which gave him most pleasure. He loved to whittle, and he was never so happy as when he could change the shape of a nose, or improve the expression of a face with his great pen-knife with its bone handle and its six blades, including a gimlet, a button-hook, and a corkscrew.

He was content with his work and with his life. But sometimes, when he thought of the past, he shook his head, and his face assumed an expression of regret. Once, many years ago, he had fallen in love with a young woman whose eyes were bluer than

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cornflowers. He wanted her to be his wife; his strange, dreamy manner attracted her, and she confessed that she felt an affection for him. But her mother refused to let her marry a poor man, for she knew that her daughter would be unhappy. "You cannot live in a garret," she had said, and the young girl agreed with her. When Papa Jonas came for his answer, she met him with traces of tears on her cheeks. "If you only were in trade," she exclaimed . . . "but, really, how would we live?"

Papa Jonas had never married. Yet as he sat of an evening in his workshop, surrounded by his dolls, he thought to himself, "I have been married a dozen times—to Juliet, to Helen, to Ophelia, to Angelica . . . well, they have not made me either happy or unhappy. But at least they did not ask me to become a grocer for their

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sake. They were satisfied with me as I am."

And he consoled himself with this reflection:

"It is all a question of how you look at it."

Now, from his window, he could see the Reverend Doctor Twine strolling up and down in his little garden with its square walks made of stone. "There," he said to himself, "goes the vicar of God, and my landlord. He is a good and simple man. As he walks up and down below me, he sees this house, the church next door, and the walls of his garden, trellised with vines. But here, from this window, I can see a number of other yards and gardens. In a house across the way, a young woman is combing out her hair. It is golden, like that of an undine, and youth is apparent in the graceful motions of her arms. Alas,

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this charming picture is invisible to the minister, who is thinking of to-morrow's sermon."

As the afternoon waned, and the sun sank lower and lower behind the houses across the way, the old puppet master laid aside his work, and for a while stood quietly watching the approach of twilight. "It is like a tide," he thought, "turning in the river. One would say that time had paused here for a moment, in order that night and day might greet each other as they passed. The sun is no longer visible; and the window at which I saw the young woman combing out her hair is empty and dark. The hopes which entertain our hearts are like the birds; they sleep at sunset."

At this moment Christopher Lane put his head in at the door, and cried out, "Are you coming, Papa Jonas?"

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The puppet master looked up with a start. "What," he asked, "is it so late? I was simply enjoying the sunset. Yes, wait for me; I am going over to the theatre with you."

Taking up his hat, he followed his assistant onto the street. At the foot of the stoop, they met Mrs. Holly returning from the grocer's, her arms laden with bundles. "Good evening, Mrs. Holly," said Papa Jonas.

"Hello, there," she cried. Her bright, young face peered at him gaily over bread, milk, and cans of soup, as she hurried by. Papa Jonas looked after her with a smile.

"Christopher," he said, "I envy the child who is upstairs waiting for her bath and her supper. She is not like me: she finds nothing sad in this last hour of the day, which brings her mother home. To her the twi-

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light, with its shadows, is like another world, a world of cats, of dolls, of teapots, of little beings with joyous faces, gentle and grotesque."

He thought for a moment. "The Abbé Géloni," he declared, "made a number of these tiny beings, about a foot long, which he kept in large glass bottles. He made them out of manure, and what the Count of Kueffstein's biographer calls very disgusting materials. It does not surprise me, for there is life in everything, even in manure."

Christopher replied that the Abbé Géloni was a great alchemist, but that Papa Jonas also had made a number of men and women able to move and speak. "And the proof of it is," he added, "that little Amy May Holly likes to bring her rag doll down to play with them. She has names for them

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all. She calls the old Jew Mr. Moses. Did you know that, Papa Jonas?"

Papa Jonas nodded his head. "It does not surprise me," he said. "To us, those puppets are only so many pieces of wood. Yet, as a matter of fact, their faces express the most poignant emotions. Mr. Moses, for example, has only to move his arms and legs by means of some wires, in order to appear as lifelike as a child, or a dog. It is true that children understand these things better than we do, for they have not yet learned to doubt everything. They are not afraid to believe, and so they do not make so many mistakes."

By this time they had reached Ninth Avenue where, at that hour, the elevated trains were rushing northward, groaning horribly, and bursting with passengers. In the west the yellow light of day had given way to

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the clear green of twilight; the evening star shone in the sky. In the east, night had already darkened the streets.

As Papa Jonas crossed the avenue between two trucks which seemed almost ready to crush him, he remarked, "At dusk all things suffer a subtle change. When the sun sinks below the earth, their natures begin to be affected by the influences of night, and they take on mysterious aspects. No longer able to see, we live among shapes which would seem to us monstrous and alarming if we did not know what they were. It is the world in which a child lives, and it is full of good and evil spirits. The good spirits have fat, round bellies like his own, their faces are amiable and innocent. But the bad spirits are without eyes, noses, arms, or legs; or perhaps they have the appearance of shaggy monsters. For we do not

PAPA JONAS

see ourselves in the form of evil spirits. It is this which makes me hopeful for humanity."

With a brisker stride, he continued in the direction of the stable, where he gave his plays.

II

ON THE BRIDGE

STANDING on the bridge of his puppet theatre, Papa Jonas remarked to his assistant:

“A puppet should be simple and noble. Its gestures should be few but expressive. The puppets of M. Brioché, which counted Molière among their admirers, were clumsy wooden dolls with animated faces, and roughly jointed limbs. Art must be rude in order to be great: it must express itself with vigor.”

He added,

“The artist is not a pedant. He should speak only to suggest. That is why pup-

ON THE BRIDGE

pets are a great art, for they suggest with the utmost economy, and in a severe manner, the noblest impulses, and the most terrible passions."

Leaning down, he began to rehearse Sancho Panza in a few gestures. As the figure of the little squire began to walk and wave its arms, Christopher felt an inclination to laugh. However, he restrained himself, out of respect for Papa Jonas. Instead he exclaimed earnestly:

"I should like to make a puppet able to laugh and cry. Because, after all, that is what people do."

Papa Jonas replied, holding one leg of Sancho Panza suspended in the air:

"You are a realist. That is to say, in the midst of grief you look for something to amuse you. Well, that does not interest me. It is life, if you like; but I

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am preoccupied with something else."

He meant that he was preoccupied with the unreal, and the unchanging. "Perhaps," he admitted, "a stable near Ninth Avenue is not exactly the place for it. I often think that I would like to build my theatre in the west, on a slope shaded by trees, and within sight of the sea. Then those who watched my plays could admire, in the distance, the hills, or the ocean, instead of these dusty beams."

And he glanced disconsolately around the gloomy stable, with its bare walls.

"Yes," said Christopher dreamily; "the west . . . that would be fine."

Papa Jonas smiled. "You are not a realist," he said; "you are a young fool. Being in the east, you long for the west; and if you were west, you would long for the east. You are like Mr. Aristotle, with

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his great nose; you cannot see what is under it."

Papa Jonas was right; Christopher did not know what he wanted. He was a poet; that is to say, he wrote verses, which he was unable to sell. Still, this did not discourage him. He was happy because, as Papa Jonas said, he was hardly aware of what was going on under his nose. His eyes were always on the future, which glowed with the brightest colors. It is not to-day, he thought, but to-morrow that is important. As he went to bed in his cold, bare room, he comforted himself with this reflection.

He was poor, but it did not seem to him that he was any worse off for that reason. He longed to travel, but it was all of the mind; he simply wished to be somewhere else, because the sky looked so beautiful far

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away. The city with its gray streets, its windy shadows, its harsh, clear lights, was like a wall over which he gazed with longing at the rest of the world. When the sun went down across the river, leaving the sky yellow and green and violet, he thought: That is the way the west is now. And he saw in imagination the prairies, the mountains, and the desert, bathed in that ineffable glow.

It was this feeling which drew him to the puppets. They seemed to him like men and women of long ago, or far away; and the scenes which he set up with such care on the stage were also of places far away. He liked to imagine that the little dolls were really Hamlet, or Jonah with his whale; and he felt in their presence that serene sorrow which comes from a contemplation of tragedies faded with age.

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Now he said to Papa Jonas: "Well, perhaps I don't know what I want. But why does it astonish you? I should like to write some beautiful poems, or a great book. I am simply looking for beauty . . ."

"Yes," said Papa Jonas. He peered over the bridge at the strings in his hands, at the little squire standing awkwardly and quietly below him, with one raised foot. "We also look for beauty," he said; "these little dolls . . . that is what makes them laughable or pathetic. Some have bellies, and others have dreams. What a pity; but that is the way it is."

He let the strings fall, and, descending from the bridge, picked up Sancho Panza and tied him to a nail in back of the stage. Then he put out the lights. "I am going to supper now," he said; "would you care to come along?"

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"No," said Christopher. He was hungry, and he had no money, but he wished to be alone, as he had some work to do. "I've had my supper," he said.

Papa Jonas opened the door. "Good-night," he said; "to-morrow we will rehearse Don Quixote and the barber. Come a little early; there is always plenty to do."

So saying, he went off thoughtfully to the restaurant where he was accustomed to dine.

Sancho Panza hung on his nail, and stared at the wall. The stable was cold and ghostly, and in the gloom the little squire's face, usually so cheerful, expressed dissatisfaction and alarm. "No, really," he seemed to be saying, "there is nothing gay about this. An actor's life has its disadvantages." In the silence one would have said that he was thinking of the shop, with

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its rows of puppets hanging on the walls.

Presently a brown rat crept out of the wall, and slid across the floor toward the stage. When he came to Sancho Panza he stopped, and regarded the figure of the squire with admiration. "What do you think?" he asked his wife, who was accompanying him. "There is no use trying to bite it. But on the other hand, merely as a piece of art . . ."

"What a fool you are," she replied angrily; "when I am hungry, do you think I wish to discuss art? You are not a very good provider, because you spend all your time looking at things which are of no use to me."

And she began to gnaw at a piece of leather which was used in the scenery.

"This is more practical," she said.

Upstairs in his room on the top floor of

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the stable, Christopher Lane sat in front of his desk made out of a soap box. He was tired, and his stomach was empty, but he was happy because he was writing a poem. As he boiled some water over the gas jet, to make tea, he looked out of his window at the west where there was still some light to be seen. His eyes fell upon the black walls of the houses, with their uneven chimney-pots, the sudden edge of the rooftops against the lighter sky, angry and sharp as knives. But he saw in his mind the yellow cliffs of the sea, and ruddier sails returning across the water stained with the descending sun.

“Low in the west,” he wrote, “upon the sea’s gray stair . . .”

III

THE ISLAND OF GERANIUMS

AMY MAY HOLLY was six years old. She was stout and cheerful, and she lived with her mother on the top floor of the two-story house at No. 12 Barrow Street, directly over Papa Jonas, whose workshop was on the floor below. Mrs. Holly was a newspaper woman: that it to say, she conducted a column called *Advice to Lovers*, on an evening paper. She received the confidences of young men and women, and she replied to their anxiety with earnest and sensible proposals. But at home she was careless and happy-go-lucky; she was like a child. Amy May al-

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ways insisted that she was older than her mother, whom she felt obliged to look after. "I don't know what you'd do," she told her more than once, "if you didn't have me."

"Oh, dear," cried Mrs. Holly. And she wrung her stubby fingers in dismay.

In the afternoon, when her mother went down to the paper, Amy May stayed at home, and looked after the house. She fed Tibbie, the canary; she played with Jane Demonstration, the little white rabbit; and she trotted solemnly up and down with the carpet-sweeper. Then she went to look at the geraniums in the bath-tub. It was a large, old-fashioned tub, with plenty of room at the farther end for a small box of geraniums perched on some sticks, like a lake-dwelling. Mrs. Holly liked to look at the flowers across the clear green water of

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her bath; and Amy May kept some little china dolls among the leaves, and made believe the flower-box was an island. She had a wooden boat, and while her mother scrubbed her ears and her back, she took her dolls sailing.

She arranged picnics from one end of the bath-tub to the other. She was capable, she was in earnest, and she knew exactly what was needed for every occasion. "Take your rubbers, children," she said, "and some blocks to play with, in case it rains."

"They're all girls," she told her mother, "like you and me. Maybe some day I'll have a little boy doll." That was her way of asking for things.

Mrs. Holly sighed, because she had a few problems of her own. She was a widow; she felt that she was beginning to look older; and she was tired of giving advice to lovers.

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"Well," she said, "perhaps Papa Jonas will give you a little boy doll, if you ask him for it."

"Do you think so?" said Amy May. She would have asked for it anyway, sooner or later, but she liked to talk it over with somebody first. "Maybe he'll give me the nice one with the long red nose," she said. "His name is Mr. Aristotle, mother, and he's the little girl with the real hair's brother. Her name is Princess Angelica. I like Angelica, mother, because she looks like me. I play we're sisters, and we tell each other secrets. Do you know what she told me? Well, she told me . . ." she thought for a moment, her face drawn up in a frown . . . "she told me . . ." and leaning over to her mother, she whispered in her ear, "bzbzbzbzbz."

"No," exclaimed Mrs. Holly. "Do you

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know what I think?" And she whispered solemnly back,

"Bzbzbzbz."

After supper, while her mother washed the dishes, Amy May went to say goodnight to the rabbit, Jane Demonstration. This tiny creature inhabited a sort of hutch, built by Christopher Lane out of a soap box, and placed near the stove. After laying a small, cold, china doll beside her for company, Amy May covered all but the rabbit's nose with a quilt made of cotton and silk. "Goodnight," she said. "Hold the truth."

As soon as she was gone, Jane Demonstration crept slyly out from beneath the covers, and getting as far as possible from the cold china doll, settled down on top of the quilt with voluptuous satisfaction.

Amy May Holly was a Christian Scien-

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tist. At the age of six she repeated from memory the lessons taught her by the laundress, Amelia Adams, who arrived each Monday morning, to do the wash. Mrs. Holly never failed to be surprised at the stories that Amy May repeated with such pious joy. But it never occurred to her to deny them. Once or twice she asked, "Do you really believe it?"

"Of course," said Amy May. She believed it because the laundress had told her so.

"Then it's good with me," said her mother. She was a sceptic, and her manner was a little rare, but she was polite, and she respected the opinions of others.

The child took over the language of the religion which charmed and consoled her. "There was a man," she declared, "who was pushed by a bee."

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"Tst," said her mother. "Did it hurt him?"

"No," replied Amy May. "It didn't hurt him. He knew the truth, and he felt quite well."

Mrs. Holly shook her head. "That's grand," she declared. She wanted to know why the bee had pushed him.

"It was an error," said Amy May. "He sat down on him."

She went to bed each night with a rag-doll by the name of Anabelle Lee. Anabelle was ugly, and she had only one eye, but her face expressed a lively optimism. When Mrs. Holly had kissed her daughter's cheeks, soft and cool as rose-leaves, she repeated a little prayer she used to say as a child, and which she had never forgotten:

"From goolies and ghosties,
From long legged beasties,

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And things that go bump in the night,
Good Lord deliver us."

To this Amy May added in a low voice and without a pause: "What is the scientific statement of being there isnolifeno-truthintellenceorsubstanceinmatterforGod is not matirilheis spichul." Then she repeated a few little prayers, which she improvised for the occasion: "God bless mother and Papa Jonas and Christopher Lane and make Anabelle Lee a good girl, amen."

Mrs. Holly turned out the light, and went back to her work. She was making a dress for Agamemnon's wife, who also played the part of Lady Macbeth, and the Queen of Denmark. For a while, as she sewed, she sang to herself under her breath; but presently the singing stopped, and she sat, looking dreamily before her, her hands idle in

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her lap. She hated cooking and sweeping, but she approached them with a sort of jaunty rush; on the other hand, sewing simply made her sleepy. One button was enough, she always hoped, to hold things up, what with safety-pins and a bit of string. Poor Mary Holly—what a great vexation she must have been to her daughter, who was just as neat as her mother was untidy. In the end, it was Amy May who put on her own buttons; and since she liked to sew, she even put a few on her mother's things, here and there, wherever she thought they might be needed. She was willing and earnest, but she was not always exact, and her buttons, an inch too high, or a little too low, gave Mrs. Holly at times an appearance of improvisation, not unbecoming to her short and vigorous figure.

Now she sat alone in the lamplight, her

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stubby, bitten fingers folded in her lap, her brown eyes cloudy with doubts, misty with dreams. She was thinking that it was nearly time to send Amy May to school; and that she was tired of giving advice to lovers. It was always others who were in love . . . well, what was the good of that?

She was lonely; she was always a little lonely in the spring, sulky and uneasy . . . There was something about the city in May that made her want to dance and cry, that made her happy and unhappy, all in a breath. Perhaps it was the sky, with its shining far-away look . . . she would have liked to be far away, too—with Papa Jonas, and the puppets, and Christopher Lane, and Amy May—and the laundress . . .

For after all, one did grow older; life slipped away out of one's fingers. And lilacs were out in the south; all the country

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round about was green, and white, and sunny yellow. She wanted spring to come in her heart, too, as it came in the city; with sweeter winds and brighter skies.

Trees felt the spring. The sap moved through them, and they burst into leaves. They stirred and lived, they turned green and lovely.

She had no use for buttons at all, by the end of April . . .

White dogwood blossoms were out in the Park, and children were sailing their boats in the pond. The city was so gay in spring, so clear and windy . . .

What she wanted to know was, what was the good of other people's love affairs?

IV

THE WORKSHOP

THE next afternoon Amy May and Anabelle Lee went to call on Papa Jonas. It was a formal call, and for this reason Anabelle Lee was dressed in her best frock. Held together by a safety-pin, it concealed with austerity the lines of her figure. These faults did not cause Anabelle Lee the least embarrassment. Hopeful and meek, she allowed herself to be held upside down by one foot, while her mother knocked on the door of the puppet shop.

“Come in,” cried Christopher.

Amy May advanced into the room, and made a little bow. “How do you do,

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Mr. Lane," she said; "is Papa Jonas in?"

Christopher had played with Amy May before, and he knew what was expected of him. "How do you do, Miss Holly," he said. "Papa Jonas is out. But he'll be in directly. Won't you take a seat? Here is an elegant seat . . ."

And he pulled a little soap box out from under the work table.

Amy May sat down, and arranged her skirts. From the top of the soap box, the room seemed very high to Amy May, very large, and shadowy, and still. The worn trousers of Mr. Lane, with baggy knees, rose past her serious eyes like the legs of a god.

The poet was preparing for the production of *Don Quixote*. Surrounded by shavings which gave forth a sweet and aromatic odor, he was putting the finishing touches

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on a sword with which the Knight of La Mancha hoped to destroy the heathen Malambrino. Amy May sat at his feet, with the patient Anabelle Lee in her lap, and gazed up at him with longing and respect.

"Well, how are you?" she said, to begin with. "Have you made any new accomplishments in your work?"

"Yes indeed," replied Christopher. He swung the little sword through the air, in order to enjoy its terrifying appearance.

"Heu," he exclaimed. And with a superb pass, he plunged the wooden point into the cotton waistcoat of the King of Denmark, who hung on the wall.

Amy May laughed, shyly and merrily. "You do the funniest things," she said: "you're the humorest person . . ."

Then, all at once becoming grave, she held out Anabelle Lee for him to look at.

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"Do you like the dress?" she asked. "Mother made it. She made it out of a ribbon, and my panties. I think it's beautiful."

Christopher agreed that it was a handsome dress. But that was not enough for Amy May. "She has nicer dresses," she said. This was not true; but she wished to spare Anabelle's feelings. She explained that they had come to see Papa Jonas.

"We came," she declared, "to ask him for a favor."

"Maybe it's something I could do," suggested Christopher.

Amy May shook her head. "It's a serious favor," she said; "I think we'd better wait, if you don't mind."

"Not at all," said Christopher; "make yourself at home." He turned back to his

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work again. "He'll be here soon," he said.

Left to her own devices, Amy May looked thoughtfully down at her feet, small, and round in front, and huddled together. Then she bent her head to bring her ear close to Anabelle's painted mouth. "Well," she said in a whisper, "you'll have to wait till you get upstairs."

She turned back to the poet again. "Do you think people ever get lonesome sometimes?" she asked.

Christopher looked at her with surprise. "Why, of course," he said; "people often get lonesome. But you're not lonesome, Amy May?"

"No, not me," said Amy May: "it's Anabelle Lee. She gets lonesome and lonely."

"Now," said Christopher, "that's a shame."

Amy May continued with a frown. "Do

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you think Papa Jonas would give me a doll for Anabelle Lee to play with, if I asked him? because mother thought maybe if I asked him, he would."

Mr. Lane thought it very likely, but he wondered just what doll would do. There was Angelica, of course, and Ophelia . . .

But Amy May wanted a boy doll.

"A boy doll," exclaimed Christopher. "Whatever do you want a boy doll for, Amy May?"

"For Anabelle Lee," said Amy May.

And she explained that Anabelle Lee wanted to be married. Both Amy May and her daughter liked to play house: and they desired a man. They needed a husband, a doctor, and a grocer, but they were willing to economize: one man could be all three, with a little imagination.

Christopher, however, was shocked.

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"A doctor?" he exclaimed with surprise: "Amy May—don't you cure your child with love any more?"

"Yes, I do," said Amy May. "But this is just a game. She likes to have the doctor go thump on her stummick. That's the way we play.

"She's only a doll," she added, "and she doesn't know any better."

But his criticism had touched and troubled her, and she added thoughtfully, as though trying to settle things with herself, "well, it's only playing, anyhow."

In the cool and dusty light of late afternoon, it seemed to the young poet as if Anabelle's one bright eye were gazing up at him with a strangely earnest expression. She seemed to be trying to tell him something: perhaps that she was lonesome and lonely. He thought he heard a voice, elfin,

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faint, and harsh, dry as the click of peas:

"Women have need of love, Christopher Lane, even though they happen to be made of rags, and have only one eye. What a shame; but after all, what is more natural? Such women sometimes receive from the hands of Lachesis husbands they do not deserve and cannot satisfy. It is to accidents of this character that the stoic adjusts himself by bowing his will to the will of the immortal gods."

But that was hardly the way Anabelle Lee might have been expected to talk. Christopher Lane turned around with a start. There, at his elbow, was Mr. Aristotle, hanging from a nail in the wall. And it seemed to the young man that Mr. Aristotle was gazing at him with a frightened and melancholy smile.

"It's only playing," said Amy May;

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"don't you think it's all right if it's only playing?"

"Yes," replied Christopher absently, "yes . . . Well, you see," he said to Mr. Aristotle, "it's only playing."

But he thought that Mr. Aristotle shook his head; and that his wooden face, with its great nose, was turned upon Anabelle Lee with a look of horror.

A few moments later Papa Jonas himself entered the shop. He carried in his hands a can of paint and a faded flower given him by a child on the street. When he learned that Amy May wanted a boy doll for Anabelle Lee to play with, he advanced the opinion that Anabelle Lee ought to be satisfied with the company of an agreeable young rabbit, like Jane Demonstration.

"But, Papa Jonas," said Amy May, "Jane Demonstration is only very very little

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yet, and mother won't even let me take her out of her box. Can't I have a boy doll, Papa Jonas, can't I, please, for Anabelle Lee to play with?"

Christopher explained that the rag doll wished to be married.

"There's no doubt about it," he said gravely; "you can see it in her eye."

"She's so lonesome," said Amy May; "she cries all the time." She turned to her daughter. "Don't you, Anabelle Lee, darling."

Anabelle Lee did not deny it.

Papa Jonas looked soberly down at the little brown head bent so anxiously above its darling. And as he stood there, this grave old man felt a sudden pang of envy and pity for Anabelle Lee. It would be so grand, he thought, to be made of rags, and to be loved. But love goes by, after a

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while, and then there is only a little figure left with drooping arms and one lonely eye . . . or an old man with his dolls . . .

He thought to himself: "Yet love itself does not change; it finds new cheeks to kiss. It follows youth, as the birds follow the spring. Their songs pass above the cotton fields and sound again in our orchards, among the daisies and the apple blossoms. Then in the autumn they rise swiftly and quietly from the thinning trees, and fly away to build their nests in branches still murmuring with bees. Others hear their songs, while winter sleeps in our fields.

"Love is man's soul: it does not grow like his hopes, it does not break like his heart."

"Please, Papa Jonas," said Amy May, "can I have Mr. Aristotle?"

Papa Jonas gave a start: and Christo-

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pher let out a low whistle. "So you wish, Amy May," said Papa Jonas, "to arrange a marriage between Anabelle Lee and Mr. Aristotle? Dear me . . . I must think it over a little."

Giving his assistant an anxious wink, he said to him, "Do you believe they would be happy together, Christopher Lane?"

"Ak," he thought, "really, just when I am so fond of him . . ."

The poet looked at the little clown, hanging disconsolately on the wall. He remembered that Mr. Aristotle was one of his master's favorite dolls; and he shook his head gloomily. "No," he said firmly; "it would be an unhappy marriage. Why, for one thing, he would simply pinch her black and blue."

At these words Amy May gave a cry. "Oh," she exclaimed. And clutching Ana-

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belle Lee to her bosom with a gesture at once defiant and comforting, she added, "I wouldn't let him—never."

"There, now," said Papa Jonas in wheedling tones, "did you hear what my assistant said, Amy May? As a matter of fact, it is my opinion also. Let me give you, instead, this little figure of Hamlet. I have another like it, and besides, I am sure he would make an excellent husband for Anabelle Lee, since he has a good deal to say, but all quite gentle and sad. Or look—here is Romeo, Amy May—would you like Romeo? or Prince Giglio—yes, there's a beauty for you . . . but not Mr. Aristotle, my child, no, not Mr. Aristotle."

However, Anabelle Lee's heart was set on Mr. Aristotle, and nothing else would do; so in the end Papa Jonas was obliged to give in. "Very well, then," he said with

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a deep sigh, "you shall have Mr. Aristotle. Perhaps it is all for the best."

Turning to his assistant, he exclaimed, "Christopher, we must give our little friend a new suit. This clown's dress is hardly the proper habit for a bridegroom. Come, let us see what we can find in the closet."

Amy May rose to her feet, still holding Anabelle Lee tightly to her chest. "There, there," she murmured, "it's all right now . . . don't cry . . ."

Anabelle Lee was not crying. She remained silent and absorbed. And it seemed to Christopher that her eye, made out of a shoe button, shone with agreeable thoughts.

V

MR. ARISTOTLE AND MR. MOSES

MR. ARISTOTLE hung on a nail over the work bench. He was a clown, like Polichinelle, or Punch, but he liked to imagine that he was a philosopher. And of all the philosophers he preferred the stoics. "To be a stoic," he used to say to Mr. Moses, who hung beside him, "is to be your own master. You ask for nothing; and whatever happens, that is exactly what you wanted."

Mr. Moses was not a philosopher. With his sad face, lined with care, he was designed to play the part of Bildad, or an old Hebrew, but so far, at least, his gestures

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were stiff and unsatisfactory. As a matter of fact he did not care very much for the stage; he would have liked to hang all day upon his nail, and think quietly about the Seven Numbers of God, and other religious subjects. It was his misfortune to be an actor; he accepted his fate with resignation, but he did not make believe that he enjoyed it.

That night, after Amy May had gone upstairs again, he said to Mr. Aristotle, for he wished to congratulate him,

"My friend, I envy you very much. Now you are going to have a fine home, and nothing to do." When Mr. Aristotle did not answer, he added,

"What, are you unhappy? You hang there with such a dismal air."

Mr. Aristotle gave a groan. "Did you hear," he asked, "that I am to be married?"

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Such a thing has never happened to me before."

Mr. Moses replied that it was for this reason that he envied him. "Just think," he said; "a home of your own. And what a home, with soft chairs to sit on all day, and with a wife like that—my goodness. . . ."

Mr. Aristotle shook his head. "A wife like that?" he exclaimed. "What do you mean? All of rags, and so thin—I have never seen any one half so ugly. What is more, with one eye—no, really you are joking. Well, spare my feelings, please. There is still time to do something—to throw myself out of the window, for instance."

"No, no," cried Mr. Moses in alarm, "I am not joking, I assure you. And the window—what a terrible idea. If you

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knew how I am feeling now, you would see that I do not wish to joke, exactly. Shall I tell you something? If only she had chosen me. . . .”

Mr. Aristotle let out a low whistle. “So that is it,” he said. “Well, poor fellow. Let me tell you, I wish she had chosen you. Yes, I wish with all my heart that you were the one. So then, you love her? My poor friend.”

“It is true,” said Mr. Moses sadly; “I cannot keep my eyes away from Miss Lee. She is so slender and lively; what a wife she would make for the right man. But that is over now; she prefers you.” And he sighed heavily.

“As for her having only one eye,” he added, “that is nothing; an eye is the smallest thing. The question is, how does she use it? Did you see the way she looked

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at you? so tender, and a little moist."

"Well," said Mr. Aristotle, "now that you speak of it . . . but as a matter of fact, most of the time she was upside down."

"What difference does that make?" replied Mr. Moses gloomily. "I could see that she had glances for no one but you. Ak, you attracted her, and I didn't—that's all there is about it."

Mr. Aristotle repeated that he had no intention of being married. "No," he said, "I would rather jump out of the window. Still, I cannot help it, exactly, if she looked at me. As a matter of fact, I cannot abide women, except now and then. I fall in love, and out of it again. I am something of a cavalier, a very powerful fellow. It is true that I attract women, and one cannot always be ungracious. I have lived—you can imagine. . . . But to marry, at my age?

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No, no, my friend—marriage is nothing for an artist. I have a career ahead of me: I am going to be a famous actor. That is what I love—the stage, acting, applause. As for the rest—fui.” Here he made a contemptuous motion with his hands.

Mr. Moses shook his head. “I am not an artist,” he said humbly. “I am what you might call a family man.”

“Now that you speak of it,” said Mr. Aristotle, “that is where the trouble lies. Do you think a woman wants what you might call a family man? The deuce—that is what she says, but whom does she marry, after all? Why, simply a man like me, an actor, or a poet. That has something of an air about it.”

Mr. Moses agreed with him. “Yes,” he said, “you are right. What does it matter what you are, really? It is always for

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something else one gets on in this life. One must have a certain air . . . that is what is fetching. I suppose if I were a great actor, like you, or Hamlet here, I could have all the women in the world. But then I wouldn't want them. Tst . . . Oh my."

And he relapsed into dreary silence. Mr. Aristotle also became silent, his brow wrinkled with moody thoughts. "Come," he said to himself, "what would a stoic do in my position? Well, the devil. . . . Must I really go through with it? But what of my career?"

Outside, in the branches of a tree in Dr. Twine's little garden, the birds were disputing among the leaves, in the evening light.

"In the west," remarked a linnet to his friend, "the seagulls spend the night perched on the rocks at the sea's edge. In

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the morning the pelicans, with profound looks, rise from the water, and sail slowly out against the breeze. Ai, those pelicans, they make my heart beat. Then the yellow cliffs of the coast, with the blue, distant hills . . . there's beauty for you."

"It is true," replied the other, "the west is very pretty. I have also been there. But unless one is a pelican, there is nothing to eat. What I say is, food first, and then scenery, or whatever you please. That is why I came east again. It is purely a practical matter with me."

So saying, he arranged the feathers of his breast with a satisfied air. But his friend uttered a mournful cry. "Did you ever hear of the duck who turned out to be a swan?" he asked. "Well, like him, I have only one wish: it is to become a pelican. Yes, I long for it, I try and try to become

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a pelican. Do you think perhaps I look a little larger?"

And with an anxious expression, he puffed out his chest as far as it would go.

VI

WALK AFTER REHEARSAL

AMY MAY was sewing in her mother's room. While she sewed, she sang:

“Lavender’s blue, dilly dilly,
Lavender’s green.
When I am king, dilly dilly,
You shall be queen.”

She had decided to postpone the wedding a week, in order to furnish Anabelle Lee with a trousseau. As she stitched on a nightgown, made from an old curtain, she cast from time to time a glance full of comfort at her child, who lay indolently upon the bed.

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"Are you quite happy, Anabelle Lee, darling?" she asked. "Well, don't move, then, will you?"

"I'm going to get you some ribbon to put in your hair."

The bride-to-be lay on her back, and looked at the ceiling. Whatever the future held for her, she faced it without alarm. Her gentle nature, composed of rags, did not permit the most outrageous accidents to alter its character. Such souls, made of tatters, are firmer than iron. They can be cut to pieces, but they cannot be broken.

Amy May arose, and went to find a ribbon to wind in Anabelle's hair. In the kitchen she stopped to talk to Jane Demonstration, who gazed out upon a world foreign to her nature, with pink and anxious eyes. Jane was to be the bridesmaid, if she behaved herself. "Will you like

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that?" asked Amy May. "Be a good girl, now."

And she dropped a kiss, small, round, and delicate, on Jane's cold nose.

"Do you want to marry, too?"

But Jane remained motionless and reserved.

Returning to her mother's room, Amy May sat down to dream of the wedding. The ceremony itself did not concern her; she hoped that Anabelle Lee would behave herself, and that there would be something to eat. There might even be, she let herself think, ice-cream in more than one color. Then, after it was all over, she meant to take Anabelle Lee and Mr. Aristotle home with her forever and ever, and lose no time in setting up a doctor's office and a grocery store.

Lost in happy speculation, she thought

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that Mr. Aristotle would settle down once he was married. But this was not the opinion of Christopher Lane. On his way home that night from a rehearsal in the theatre, he said to Mrs. Holly,

“What do you think of it? Poor Mr. Aristotle, I am sorry for him. He was an actor, and now he is to be a grocer.”

He went on to say that Papa Jonas had made great preparations for the wedding. “There is to be ice-cream,” he declared, “and we have engaged an organ grinder. But do you think they will be happy? Well, I don’t know.”

And they looked at each other with smiles of amusement.

“No, but really,” said Christopher, “marriage is a serious thing. Just think how it changes everything. There’s something sad about that, you know.”

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Mrs. Holly laughed, and tossed in her arms the tiny figure of Don Quixote she was carrying. "You're a funny boy," she said. "Do you know about that?"

Mr. Lane smiled politely, because he did not think he was so funny. He wanted to say, "I'm old enough to know something about these things." But instead he remarked,

"Do I seem to you so young?"

Mrs. Holly looked at him out of the corner of her eyes. All at once she felt like saying, "Why, you're nothing but a child. You need some one to take care of you. Oh, these poets. . . ."

Mr. Lane walked along, looking soberly before him. He was thinking: "Yes, that's what happens: they turn you into a grocer. Or perhaps you're like Papa Jonas; you keep on being what you want to be. Only

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you have to know what you want to be."

Again, after a silence, he asked, "Do I seem so young?"

"Oh," said Mrs. Holly, "why . . . I don't know." And to hide her thoughts, which were confused and tender, she stopped to snap her fingers at a great dog, who was approaching her with a serious expression.

"Hello, doggie," she said; "how's your work?"

"He looks so serious," she explained.

She turned again to the poet. "About Mr. Aristotle," she said; "what makes you think they'll be unhappy together? Don't they love each other?"

But that did not seem so important to Christopher. "Oh, well," he said, "if they're in love. . . ." He smiled to think of it. "What I mean," he said, "is having to

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leave the shop, and play games like doctor and grocery store."

"If I were in love," said Mrs. Holly, "I don't think I'd mind."

But Christopher shook his head. It seemed to him that Mr. Aristotle's face was already quite transfigured by anxiety. "You see," he said to her earnestly, "it makes me a little sad to think of what he can do, and how he'll have to spend the rest of his life not doing it."

"That's such a gloomy way of looking at things," replied Mrs. Holly. "You don't see the nice part of anything. What's glory, anyway? Well, look at Mr. Aristotle; just a lump of wood, and some strings."

"It isn't glory so much," said Christopher; "it's something else: it's what you want to be, and what you want to do."

"Yes," agreed Mrs. Holly. "But you

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can't do everything, can you? I mean, you have to give up something, after all."

"I know it," said Christopher; "still, if you have to give up something, why then you want to be sure of just what you're going to keep."

"And what are you going to keep, Christopher Lane?" she asked suddenly, looking him full in the face.

Mr. Lane stared back at her with surprise. "Why," he said gravely, "I don't know." But as he spoke he felt a sudden shock in the middle of his stomach.

Mrs. Holly looked away, and frowned. "Now why did I say that?" she asked herself. "For heaven's sake, Mary Holly. . . ."

And she continued the rest of the way in silence.

When she arrived at her apartment, she went into the kitchen, and mixed herself a

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drink of gin, orange juice, and bitters. Then lighting a cigarette, she returned to the living-room, and sat down on her foot.

"Supposing he'd said me," she thought. And she smiled to think of it.

"Well," she decided, "he never would have. But just supposing. . . ."

That evening Christopher sat for a long time at his window, looking out over the rooftops toward the west. He saw the new moon overhead, cold and white in the green sky, the quiet, early stars, and the gloom below, among the houses, shadows tumbled upon shadows, black and solid, broken with yellow lights, like yellow flowers. He heard the troubled, ceaseless murmur of the city, the distant sound of ships, the hum of cars, the rising flight of children's voices, the coming and going of people everywhere. It was like music to him, full of grief and

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longing; and in his heart choir after choir took voice, silently and secretly singing. He held his face up to the night.

“What do I want,” he thought; “what do I want?”

The cool, dark wind blew on his face, sweet with spring, sour with city smells. He stretched out his arms to the city, he opened his heart to it, he opened his heart to his brothers, to his sisters, to all those voices which, whispering, sighing, rose and trembled about him. . . .

He clasped his hands together. “Oh God,” he breathed, “give me some one to love.”

VII

A BENCH IN THE PARK

SEATED on a bench in the Park, under a tree whose early leaves kept turning from green to silver in the wind, Papa Jonas remarked to his companion, the Reverend Doctor Twine.

“The nations of Europe are unable to agree upon peace. That does not surprise me, for there are too many democracies in the world.”

“What?” exclaimed the Reverend Doctor Twine. “It is kings who make war, because they are greedy, or ambitious.”

“That is true,” Papa Jonas admitted, “but you must remember that it is easier to

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make war than to make peace. To make peace requires composure, and a certain audacity; under the most provocative conditions one must remain generous, and resolute. It is impossible for democracies to be *either* resolute or generous, because where so many must agree there will always exist the most frightful differences of opinion."

He went on to say that nowhere was this fact more clearly evidenced than in the history of Christianity. "The Catholic Cardinals," he said, "obey the Pope, who rules his people by divine right. God Himself speaks in august tones from the Vatican. But the Protestant clergy are always disputing. That is because the Protestant Churches are like little democracies. And the result is that I feel a peace in the Cathedral of Saint Patrick, that I do not feel in the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine."

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The Reverend Twine replied simply that St. Patrick's Cathedral was a dwelling place for the Almighty, but that he did not believe God lived there, because of the services. "The Catholic Church," he declared, "has never learned anything. It is the same to-day as in the time of witches and miracles."

To this Papa Jonas replied gently, and with a thoughtful air, "It cherishes its superstitions, Dr. Twine. But that is not a fault; rather it is a virtue, which it shares with the rest of humanity."

He went on to say that the strength of the Church in the past lay in the fact that its bishops were not open-minded. "They did not wish to learn anything," he said, "and they upheld their ignorance in the most charming discourses, and with the most terrible tortures. Those who attempted to

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teach them astronomy, or medicine, were burned at the stake, or broken on the wheel."

And he added with a smile: "The weakness of the Church to-day, which you and I deplore, is that it no longer burns at the stake illuminated divines who disagree with its doctrines."

"Now you are joking," said Dr. Twine. "Still, perhaps you are right, in a way. Certainly it is a terrible mistake to deny the divinity of Christ, as some ministers are doing. After all, we must stop at a point. . . . There is pride of mind, Papa Jonas, and then there is the fall."

"The point at which to stop," replied Papa Jonas, "remains a matter of opinion." For a moment he was silent, looking out across the broad sheep meadow to where the buildings at the Park's edge stood up brown and gray against the sky. At last he said with

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a sigh, "It is true that we know too much; and that is the trouble, Doctor Twine. We have wisdom, instead of the faith that springs from love. And wisdom does not make us happy. For that reason I envy the child whose world is full of the most astonishing occurrences, and whose heart beats with love and curiosity. Wisdom comes too late; she is the guest who arrives with an angry face after the party is over. It is not for nothing that the Greeks saw her in the form of a woman, with a shield, but without wings. This Goddess of the Greeks was a great fighter, and she could not bear to be contradicted. She was not very honest, and she had a bad temper. That is why she seems real to me, Doctor Twine.

"For women are better fighters than men. This year, in France, the day after Christ-

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mas, a woman delegate to the French Communist Party, Mme. Colliard, declared, in the course of an address, that she was not in favor of peace. In ringing tones she exclaimed, 'We accept violence when it will gain power for us.' That is the speech of a good woman, Doctor Twine, and by that I mean a woman who is possessed of feminine impulses. The words of Mme. Colliard are words of wisdom, not of love. In those candid and practical suggestions, I hear the voice of Pallas Athene, and of the young women of to-day."

"Yes," said the vicar, ". . . yes, that is like the young women to-day. They fill me with uneasiness. Nothing restrains them."

Papa Jonas replied: "What is there, any more, to restrain them? After all they are not like their mothers and their grandmothers. They can afford to do

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what they like, because they can pay for it. That is to say, they are able to earn their own living. And what a difference that makes, when you come to think of it. To-day a woman might marry a poor man, or a puppet master, and if she did not wish to live in an attic, she could soon afford a better place. Or for that matter, she need not marry at all. Do you know what it means when I say that women are not dependent any longer upon obedience for their bread and butter? If they wish to misbehave, that is their own affair. In the past, virtue and bread-and-butter were very closely connected. You had only to lose the one, in order to lose the other, also."

"Say what you like," replied Dr. Twine, "our hearts will never bid us sin. It is in talk such as yours, Papa Jonas, that the devil can be seen."

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“Doctor Twine,” said Papa Jonas solemnly, “you and I took over life as it was given us. We followed text, rules, manuals; and not our own hearts. I tell you that the young people to-day are following their hearts. They desire only to be honest, with others and with themselves. I like that, Dr. Twine; it does not make me comfortable, it often makes me anxious, but it fills me with hope. These young men and women are clearing the ground for those who come after. They are without respect, but that is because they have not found anything worthy of being respected. If in turn, they are not respected by those who come after them, that is their misfortune. At least those who follow will not be obliged to live an ugly life because they cannot help it. They will be free to live as

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they think right. They will be free to love, because they will not have to ask any one's permission."

He rose to his feet. "To-morrow," he said, "there is to be a wedding of two little dolls. I should be honored to have you attend it. The service, which I have composed for the occasion, is not one with which you are familiar. But it will not offend you; and besides, the God of the Methodists does not concern Himself with puppets. I have composed a service for two little beings who lack the preconceptions of our society. It is a service for children, or dolls, or dryads; for those happy and ethereal beings who people the invisible world."

On his way home, he bumped into a little girl as high as his knee, who was running and looking backward over her shoulder.

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As she bounced away from the bump, she gave him a gloomy glance.

“Look where you’re going,” she said.
“Who do you think you are?”

VIII

A CHAPTER FROM THE GREEK

THAT night Papa Jonas prepared Mr. Aristotle for the ceremony next day. Aided by Christopher Lane, he dressed the little clown in a suit made of white silk, on which were inscribed a number of red, yellow, and blue moons: "For a wedding," he said, "is the descendant of very ancient rites; and the participants should be gaily dressed, as befits those who sacrifice to the gods."

As he held Mr. Aristotle upside down, in order to arrange the rear, Papa Jonas said to him, "Mr. Aristotle, you are a clown, and like all clowns, you are a philosopher. Man

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has laid his sorrows upon your shoulders, which support them with unfailing good humor. I believe that you have listened to the discourses of Chrysippus, to the Academician Arcesilaus, to Carneades, who recognized three grades of probability; and you know that true instruction, as the stoic says, is to learn to wish that each thing shall come to pass as it does. You may even have heard Epictetus himself declare that nothing is a misfortune, unless one insists upon calling it so.

“It is true that this wedding is not of your own choosing. Is it possible that you believe yourself worthy of something better? Fie, Mr. Aristotle. That is not the attitude of a philosopher and a stoic. It is difficult to understand the purposes of heaven: they often have an appearance of improvisation.

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I speak from the standpoint of human affairs; nevertheless it is absurd to expect them to be any less vexing and mysterious to a doll made of linen and wood.

“Consider, then, that you do not know what is expected of you; and that you are not the proper judge of what constitutes your happiness. Believe that discontent is the result of ignorance.

“Perhaps your part is a tragic one; no matter, play it with dignity, and grace. Do not desire to play another part; or long to possess powers and virtues which do not belong to you. For that is another, and a sadder tragedy.

“Let me read you, as an example, the story of Anageus, Tyrant of Cnidus, as related by the poet Simonides. The translation is my own; and I will admit at once

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that it is imperfect. Nevertheless, I believe that there arises from this simple story a fragrance painful and consoling.

Taking from his pocket a soiled and dog-eared volume, Papa Jonas began to read:

The History of Anageus, Tyrant of Cnidus.

“The inhabitants of Cnidus were smaller than other men. However, they made up for their lack of stature by the elegance of their manners. They were agile, delicate, and perfect. Their lives were limited but fragrant. Their poets excelled in songs of love and of grief; and their home life was harmonious.

“At night, under the trees, beneath the quiet stars, they enjoyed fantasies with music, and shadow plays with figures from India and Persia.

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“Far off, across the blue Ægean, lay the cloudy island of Cnossos. The inhabitants of Cnossos were like every one else: that is to say, they were large, uncouth, vigorous, and gay. They excelled in boxing, in wrestling, and in poetic tragedies. Their poets received the laurel in company with athletes and famous soldiers. The citizens of Cnidus used to poke fun at these vigorous and healthy men.

“‘They are nothing but barbarians,’ they exclaimed.

“Nevertheless they felt a secret envy for their powerful neighbors.

“One day, while on his way to the public baths, Anageus, Tyrant of Cnidus, encountered the serene gaze of Helena, daughter of Lukos. He loved her, for she was beautiful, and her hair was the color of gold. The young woman returned his love with a

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pure and candid affection. They were married in the temple of Artemis, in the presence of the Senate, and the population.

“One night, Anageus and Helena were walking together in their garden, among the statues of gods and nymphs. It was spring, and the birds were building their nests among the leaves. The murmur of their voices mingled with the evening song of birds.

“‘Will you love me forever?’ asked Anageus.

“‘Forever,’ said Helena, convinced that this was so.

“The next day the wife of the Tyrant of Cnidus went on a visit to a friend in Cnossos. She was welcomed by the king, Cleanthes, who came to meet her in the royal galley, manned by perspiring slaves.

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At his first glance she was conscious of a mysterious thrill.

“That night, in the moonlight, she offered her lips to the rude kisses of Cleanthes.

“The next morning, overcome with shame, she wrote to acquaint her husband with what she had done. ‘I do not love him,’ she wrote, ‘but he has an irresistible attraction for me.’ And she sealed the missive with her tears.

“Anageus remained inconsolable for a fortnight, at the end of which time he attempted to throw himself into the sea. His grief caused the gentle people of Cnidus the greatest anguish. A meeting of the Senate was called; and amid scenes of enthusiasm, war was declared on Cnossos.

“Anageus was chosen to lead the army. Pale and composed he set to work to harass the enemy. For he knew that the slight,

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swift troops of Cnidus were no match for their heavily-armed and muscular opponents. At first, success attended his efforts and he was able to report to the Senate that his army had inflicted a series of minor but none the less galling defeats upon the foe. Then Anageus said to his lieutenant, Mnalcas.

“‘It is useless to pretend that we are stronger than they. But by a series of surprising maneuvers, it is possible to astonish them into believing that they have been defeated. Fortunately we are angrier than they are; otherwise, we should inevitably be annihilated.’

“One day, however, from the top of a hill behind which the army of Cnidus was lying concealed, Anageus, searching the ranks of the enemy, caught sight of Helena, in the

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company of Cleanthes. The former wife of the tyrant was gazing at the King of Cnossos with an admiration it was impossible either to conceal, or to misunderstand. The sight of his wife whom he still loved, was too much for the young ruler, who had been brought up to consider himself a poet and a philosopher. Maddened with an irresistible grief, Anageus gave the signal to charge. The troops of Cnossos drawn up under arms, met the attack of the men of Cnidus with dignity and wrath. Then Anageus gazed in horror at his army minus heads, arms, legs and bowels. Turning to his lieutenant, who remained beside him, he exclaimed: 'Love makes traitors of us all,' and fell upon his sword.

"When his head was shown to Helena, she remarked: 'He was too delicate for

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this world.' And with rose-leaves in her hair, she made ready for the return of Cleanthes, who was enjoying a triumphal tour of the battlefields."

IX

MR. ARISTOTLE TAKES LEAVE OF HIS FRIENDS

“**C**OME,” said Sancho Panza, who had lately returned to the workshop, to Mr. Aristotle, “what is this I hear about you? That you are to be married? It seems to me extraordinary, to say the least. Never put new wine in old bottles, is a good thing to remember. Yes, now what have you got to say for yourself? Just tell us that.”

Mr. Aristotle gazed around him with a tolerant air. “Really,” he remarked languidly, “suppose, as you say, I am to be married? Certainly there is nothing astonishing in that, to my way of thinking. It

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is simply a new experience for me, that is all; I found that I was getting a little dull, and I thought . . . well, you know that for an artist like me there is nothing so necessary as experience. I am simply stepping aside for a moment or two from my career on the stage, to see what it is like to be . . . when I return, my art will be all the richer."

These words did not convince the little squire, who shook his head doubtfully. "That's all very well," he remarked; "but don't forget this, my friend—I also have been married; I know a thing or two; and while I could easily understand a flirtation, or even a love affair . . . quietly, you understand, with no one the wiser. . . . But to be married—well, really—and to such a thin woman with only one eye. . . ."

Mr. Aristotle broke in at this point in

MR. ARISTOTLE TAKES LEAVE

an angry voice: "Please remember that you are speaking of my intended."

And as Sancho Panza began to apologize, he added more gently,

"No matter, there is no harm done. I realize that she is not exactly a beauty; but her heart is of gold; and she loves me. You do not know what it means to be loved by a good woman. Let me tell you, sometimes I am a little afraid . . . such virtue, such modesty. . . . After all, I am just a rough fellow; what if I prove a little too rough for those exquisite feelings? Yes, it is a serious matter, my friend; it is a heavy responsibility."

With that he sighed deeply.

Sancho Panza also sighed. "Yes, yes," he said, "the love of a good woman. . . . Still," he added, more brightly, "what is this I hear about her wealth? I am told

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that you are doing very well for yourself. Soft chairs to sit on—new suits to wear—” As he spoke, he glanced enviously at Mr. Aristotle out of his bright black eyes.

Mr. Aristotle made a deprecatory gesture. “Although she is not exactly wealthy,” he said, “I believe that she is very well off. I expect to spend a few months in comfort, sitting on cushions; and I will do a little thinking. Then, when I return, I will be ready to play the most important rôles.

“I may even,” he added, as an afterthought, “start a little theatre of my own. Perhaps you would be willing to consider a position. . . .”

“Hm,” said Sancho Panza, “hm . . . now, really, that is very interesting. Yes, I should say . . . well, the devil, perhaps I could play the part of a king, or an earl, eh?”

MR. ARISTOTLE TAKES LEAVE

Mr. Aristotle waved his hand grandly. "We will think about it," he declared.

And he turned to Mr. Moses, who had said nothing up to this point. "How about you, my friend?" he asked.

But Mr. Moses only shook his head, and sighed. "I am glad to see that you have changed your mind," he remarked, "although I had hoped. . . ."

"I have not changed my mind," said Mr. Aristotle hastily; "I am simply saying what I have thought all along. As a matter of fact, one gets a little stiff hanging here on the wall; it was quite another thing when I played the part of Jonah and the Whale. But now I feel that it is time to look at life from other points of view. That is the advice I would give to any artist."

And he frowned earnestly.

Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, upon a

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nearby nail, ventured to disagree with him. "No," he said, "no, I do not agree with you. Avoid women, Mr. Aristotle; they will poison your mind. Shut your ears to them; and you will save yourself a great deal of trouble."

"That may be," said Mr. Aristotle, "but after all you must allow me to lead my own life. I am obliged to your Highness, but I know what is best for me. I am not like you, gloomy and poetical; I am an adventurer, I lead a life of gaiety, and passion. That is the proper life for such a man as myself. Then at the end—if I am wrong—I shall simply throw myself out of the window. That is better than being thrown on the rubbish heap, or being made over into something else, a gravedigger, or some minor character like that."

MR. ARISTOTLE TAKES LEAVE

"In that case," said Mr. Moses slowly, "Miss Lee would be a widow."

And he gazed thoughtfully at the window.

Mr. Aristotle gave a shudder. "Really," he said, "how can you say such things? But anyhow, do you imagine for a moment that would make any difference? I tell you, she would never have you. You are too sober, my friend. Have you ever kissed a young woman when nobody was looking? That is what makes a man. You should try to act a little more like an artist. Then you would see the difference."

"I daresay you are right," said Mr. Moses sadly. "Still, I dislike to think of it. It is not the way I was brought up. Possibly there are better things than having ex-

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periences, or being an artist. I will try to think a little more about God. Then perhaps these things will not bother me so much."

X

THE WEDDING

THE sparrows did not like to spend much time in Dr. Twine's garden, where a tiny bird house had been erected for them on a pole. Active, greedy, and choleric, they preferred the streets full of traffic, in which their cries were lost beneath the noise of wheels. They explored the gutters with anxiety, and hopped about on the roofs of houses which seemed like mountains to them. As they swooped in and out between motors moving in every direction, they seemed to be saying,

“One must be bright and quick in this

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world. Get what you can; and we will discuss it later."

They were true inhabitants of the city.

Nevertheless, they sometimes made use of Dr. Twine's little garden for their wooing. There, in the mild sun, hidden from the streets by red and yellow walls, the birds enjoyed their brief and simple courtships. The male wished to show that he was a fine fellow after all; and the female replied by giving him some sharp pecks with her beak. Then they retired into the bird house, and set up housekeeping for a day, or a week. They took their furniture with them: a dove's feather, or a bunch of twigs; and their quarrels filled the garden with chirping.

They did not disturb any one at No. 12 Barrow Street, where the wedding of Mr. Aristotle and Anabelle Lee was being cele-

THE WEDDING

brated. Clad in a long veil which reached to the floor, the bride hung limply from Amy May's hand, next to the groom, who was supported by Christopher Lane. Before them stood the puppet master, behind them Mrs. Holly, the Reverend Dr. Twine, and Jane Demonstration, with a ribbon around her neck; while from the walls and corners of the shop, Mr. Aristotle's former companions regarded him with wooden and unpitying glances.

Amy May's face was flushed and serious; the hand which held the fainting Anabelle Lee was warm and wet. Christopher also was solemn. In a hush made deeper by the sound of the birds outside, Papa Jonas remarked:

"There have come before me two small and quiet beings. One is of wood, the other is of rags. They have never spoken, and

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we have no reason to believe that they have ever heard the words we have addressed to them. At the same time, let us not make the mistake of denying to motionless forms a life of which we happen to be ignorant. For life is everywhere, and in everything; it is as pervasive as it is mysterious. Everywhere it is full of joy and anguish; everywhere it is lovely, patient, and brave. It has no purpose save to continue; it has no aim, save to extend itself.

“And it extends itself by love. It sacrifices itself, in order to be born again. This is the object of marriage; and for this reason marriage is tragic. For it is a form of death. Life renews itself only at the cost of life; the new destroys and feeds upon the old. Uncaring, immortal, nature views with equal indifference the agony of birth and the pangs of dissolution.

THE WEDDING

It is all one to her; it is all the same.

“From the marriage of insects, other insects are born, with frightful claws and ardent dispositions. The swift, shy birds give birth to winged forms, from whom the same sweet songs ascend. From the wedding of minds, new thoughts are conceived; they are like the old, but they are fresh and passionate with youth. And from the wedding of souls, new hopes arise.

“All marriages are fruitful. May this one, too, be fruitful: of peace, of quiet joy.”

“It won’t be,” said Christopher.

“Don’t be so gloomy,” whispered Mrs. Holly. “Be a little gay.”

Papa Jonas continued:

“About us and around us, the air, the earth, and the sea are filled with exquisite and ethereal beings, with faces angry, joyous, and unhappy. Unheard by human

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ears, the elements resound with cries of pain, and with declarations of love, with laughter and with weeping. These bright, invisible beings mingle in the air, in the earth, and under the sea, seeking each other, seeking themselves in each other . . .”

He paused, and bending down, grasped the tiny hands of Mr. Aristotle and Anabelle Lee. “Oh divine, unpitying gods,” he exclaimed, “you in whose hands are placed these shapes that we inhabit, these patterns in which we perform, spirits of life, of fruitfulness, of increase, immortal children of the eternal mother, look down upon this wedding of two little dolls. And you, happy spirits of air, bright-eyed citizens of fire, wise gnomes and tender nymphs, watch over your little brother and sister, and wish them well. Comfort and instruct these tiny creatures to whom my words are like the

THE WEDDING

sound of streams, musical and meaningless.”

Afternoon light was falling through the room in yellow, dusty bars, steady, and full of dancing motes. All was still; drowsily, in the distance, remote and faint, voices disputed on the street, and died away. A truck went clattering by; the echoes dwindled; and the birds sang.

Papa Jonas placed the two dolls' hands together. “Do you, Anabelle Lee,” he said, “take Mr. Aristotle to be your husband, out of love and desire, and with honest intention?”

“Yes, she does,” said Amy May.

“And do you, Mr. Aristotle,” he continued, “take Anabelle Lee to be your wife to cherish insofar as you are able?”

“I do,” said Christopher Lane.

“Then,” concluded Papa Jonas, “by the power of love in my heart, I pronounce you

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man and wife. I place your hands together: from now on you go as one, sharing the sun, the dew, the rain, and the dusk. You have set forth upon a road where brave and happy people have gone before you. It is a road which passes through many cemeteries, over whose mounds and little stones of heartbreak, roses are growing. You have hills to climb, and forests to go through. It is the road of life. May its streams be clear, and its forests fragrant. May you find shade at noon; and may the quiet stars of evening light you to your rest.

“Christopher, let us serve the refreshments.”

At once, from the garden below, an organ grinder, hired for the occasion, began to play the Miserere.

“Well,” said the Reverend Twine,

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taking a breath. "Well . . . hem . . ."

And he looked at Mrs. Holly, whose eyes were wet with tears.

XI

RAIN AT NIGHT

THAT night a mist came in from the sea. Full of sea sounds, it spoke to the city with the voice of ocean. Gray with rain, the lofty buildings lifted themselves into the darkness. They were dreamy and still, like ocean-facing cliffs. The mist blew over them; and they replied with silence to the suggestions of the sea. In Madison Square, the clock on the great tower glowed quietly through the fog. It seemed to be measuring out life, as one would measure out a room. So much . . . a little more . . .

“Gently, gently, don’t crowd there. Just

RAIN AT NIGHT

keep back of me; you can't get on ahead."

Mary Holly and Christopher Lane were walking together in the rain. With rapid strides they passed the Square with its trees from whose branches the drops fell mournfully. Their faces were wet; and the street lights shone with watery grace on their cheeks and hair. They were discussing the production of *Don Quixote*, which Papa Jonas hoped to give in the fall. In a confident manner, the young poet exclaimed,

"Do you know, I would like to try my hand at *Rosinante*. I have some ideas about that." He proceeded to describe an animal made of wood and canvas, which he believed would present a picture of fidelity, meekness, and secret grief.

"After all," he said, "she needn't look exactly like a horse, because puppets aren't realistic."

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And he gazed at Mrs. Holly with a serious expression.

But Mrs. Holly shook her head. "It doesn't go big with me," she declared. "Let the poor animal alone. She was just a horse . . . you know . . . a head, and some feet, and a tail. Why give her a grief?"

She went on to say that he was always trying to improve on things. "You never see anything the way it is," she said. "Is that what it means to be a poet?"

"It must be grand to be a poet's wife," she added sourly.

When Christopher said nothing, Mrs. Holly began to fear that she had offended him.

"Are you angry?" she asked.

"Angry?" said Christopher; "no: I was just thinking of Quixote and Rosinante.

RAIN AT NIGHT

He never saw her, really; she was right under his nose, a poor skinny beast, and he kept bumping her into windmills."

"Well, that's like a poet," said Mrs. Holly delicately.

"And a poet's wife," she added under her breath.

Christopher looked ahead of him down the wet, shiny avenue, with its long rows of lights growing fainter and fainter in the rain. "Yes," he said, "it's like a poet. What I mean is, that what he cares for most is far away. And still," he added gravely, "no one needs a wife so much as a poet."

Mrs. Holly did not agree with him. "Oh, come on, now," she said.

"Well, it's true," said Christopher. He went on to explain why.

"Have you ever watched spiders spinning

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their webs? They go sailing out across space, and yet they never leave their thread . . . so they can get home again . . .

"Poets are like that, too."

"Well," said Mrs. Holly decidedly, "women aren't." She added that a woman chose a man as she would a house she wanted to live in. "A woman is like a turtle," she said; "she wants to feel the roof and the walls, all the time."

"She won't put much more than her head out."

"And that," she wound up, "is why women oughtn't to fall in love with poets."

"But they do," said Christopher shyly.

"I know it," replied Mrs. Holly gloomily; "and what I say is, it serves them right."

That night, in the quiet of her room, she sat for a long time staring out at the darkness. She was tired, and sad; life was easy

RAIN AT NIGHT

to talk about, but it was hard to make it come out right. "What on earth do you want with a poet?" she asked herself. "Haven't you enough to take care of, as it is?"

"You get so stupid in the spring. Oh dear . . ."

The scent of rained-on earth, cold and sweet, came up to her from Dr. Twine's little garden. All at once she felt herself, too, like that earth, which took back to its bosom, so quietly, so surely, all that strayed.

"That's what it is to be a woman," she thought; "you've got to wait; and some day it all comes home."

She leaned her head on her hand, and peered out at the night. And the night, hushed, wet, with faint, drenched sounds, came into her room, touched her face with motherly fingers, wrapped her in veil upon

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veil of self. For a moment the resignation of earth, with its infinite peace, bathed her heart. But it passed, leaving her lonely, and insolent. And once more she said to herself, "What do you want with wind-mills, you great' stupid? Don't you know what it means to be hurt?"

It seemed to her that Christopher's face peered at her through the gloom. She imagined that she heard him say: "No one needs a wife quite as much as a poet."

"Oh, get out," she cried; "go away, will you?"

"Because poets are like spiders. They spin their houses out of themselves . . ."

XII

MR. ARISTOTLE SPEAKS HIS MIND

TUESDAY afternoon, Amy May stood in the kitchen, and watched Amelia Adams iron out the wash. Amelia laid the linen flat on the board, sprinkled it with water, and brought the hot iron down with a thump. Then the heated cloth filled the kitchen with an agreeable odor.

“Amelia,” said Amy May, “does God love mother as much as He loves you and me?”

Amelia replied that God loved everything and everybody.

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Amy May closed her eyes, and experienced a sensation of innocent joy. When she opened them again, her face was troubled.

"Does He love Anabelle Lee, and Mr. Aristotle, too, Amelia?" she asked.

The laundress shook her head. "Bless you," she said; "if *you* love them, that's enough."

"Well, I do love them," said Amy May; "if you think that's enough."

She was silent for a moment. What she really wanted to know was if God minded her taking Anabelle Lee to the doctor's every day.

"Do you think stummick-aches are error?" she asked at last.

"Yes," said Amelia.

Amy May sighed. "Even a tiny one?" she asked in a faint voice. And she waited

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anxiously for the answer which was to confirm her doubts.

“Even tiny ones,” said Amelia. She clanged the iron down on the stove. “God is truth and love,” she said decidedly, “and there’s no pain in love.”

Amy May went soberly into her room, and threw away a box containing seven bread-pills. “There,” she said to Anabelle Lee, “you can’t be sick any more. You’re a big girl now, and it’s time you knew the truth.”

After Amelia had gone, Amy May sat down to tea with Anabelle, Mr. Aristotle, and Jane Demonstration. The white rabbit was given a piece of carrot, which she ate with haste, but in a delicate manner. The two dolls, however, enjoyed the same fare as Amy May: that is to say, they received some bread, and warm water with

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sugar and milk. Amy May held to their immobile lips the cups from which a watery trickle fell slowly down over their chins.

But first there was marketing to do; it was necessary to buy the sugar and the bread from Mr. Aristotle. Hand in hand, Amy May and Anabelle Lee approached the corner where the little clown stood leaning against a chair, which served as a counter.

"How do you do," said Amy May. After a pause, she added, "I want a pound of sugar, please, and some nice cake."

As she helped herself to what she wanted, she remarked with gracious languor,

"What a lovely day."

Mr. Aristotle said nothing. He remained standing, propped up against the chair, and regarded his customers with an expression of disdain.

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It did not leave him at tea; one would have said that he disliked the company in which he found himself. However, his silence passed unnoticed, since Amy May did all the talking anyway.

"Anabelle Lee, darling," she said, "do you like being married? There . . . you've made a spill on your dress again.

"You're the spillingest person . . ."

She stooped to wipe Mr. Aristotle's chin with her handkerchief. Then, being near his nose, she went on to wipe that also.

"Blow," she said.

She thought that Mr. Aristotle being married, might be expected to embrace his wife. With this intention, she laid his hard, wooden mouth against Anabelle's painted cheek. Mr. Aristotle seemed to her a little stiff, however.

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"Why are you so wooden?" she asked him. "Don't you *want* to kiss her?"

"Oh, poor Anabelle Lee, darling. Well, never mind . . ."

With that she took Mr. Aristotle's tea away. "There," she declared; "that's because you're so mean."

She sighed; she was tired of having tea. It was time to do a little sewing. "I wish mother would come home," she thought. Yes, that was it . . . it would be fun to sew for a while. . . .

She jumped to her feet, and went in search of her sewing things. Then she looked in her mother's closet, to see what there was to mend. But all she could find was a petticoat. Well, that would do. She took it out, and sat herself down with her dolls again.

When Mrs. Holly came home, Amy May

MR. ARISTOTLE SPEAKS

was still sewing, and singing to herself a song taught her by Christopher Lane:

“Out of the sea the night
Comes green as sea water.
The moon comes first, her white
Face shines on the water,
The moon is the night’s daughter.”

For supper Amy May had an egg, bread and butter, a glass of milk, and a dish of stewed prunes. After it was over she took her bath, in the big tin tub with the geraniums. But she forgot to send her china dolls on their usual excursion. Instead, she remarked thoughtfully,

“Mother, do you think Anabelle Lee is happy?”

Mrs. Holly smiled down at the solemn face in its rubber bathing cap. “I don’t know, dear,” she said; “I’m sure she ought

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to be. She's the sort one could hang a spider web on . . ."

"But, mother—Anabelle Lee hasn't got spider webs."

"No, my dear," said Mrs. Holly.

"Well, you're so funny," said Amy May; "I don't know what you're talking about."

At eight o'clock Mrs. Holly went out to rehearsal. Amy May was asleep; her childish breathing sounded no louder than the leaves stirring on the tree in the garden, outside her window. Silence reigned on the top floor of No. 12 Barrow Street.

Suddenly a terrific shriek resounded from the chair where Anabelle Lee was seated.

Mr. Aristotle had pinched her. Pained and shocked, she was unable to reply; she was taken by surprise; she was astonished, and she wished to weep. Instead she sat

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staring at her husband, who remarked in angry tones,

“It is impossible for me to be a stoic and a philosopher, if you do not leave me alone.”

At these words Anabelle Lee burst into tears. “How can you say such things?” she cried; “I only wanted to kiss you.”

“That is it, exactly,” said Mr. Aristotle. In a harsh voice he added,

“Why do you wish to excite me? In a marriage such as ours, that is the last thing one should wish to do. But that is like a woman: she sees no farther than her nose.”

As her sobs did not abate, he remarked more gently,

“Here, I will not say that you do not attract me. There is something about your body, with its soft curves, its easy grace, which acts powerfully upon my senses. Yes, it is useless to deny it. But one must

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look ahead a little. So far we have got along very well, you and I, because we have left each other alone. I have my life, and you have yours. Well, now, see what would happen if I were to kiss you: at once we should become emotional, grow heated, seize upon each other, and intrude ourselves. Then we should become like men and women, filled with desire and despair. It would be impossible for me to be a stoic any longer; my rowdy elements would emerge; and you would constantly present a rumpled and drowsy appearance. But do you think we should be happy? Not a bit of it: you would never be content until you had filled me full of rags or sawdust; and I should be unable to control a lively ambition to make you over in wood. We should hate each other before a week was up, because we have really nothing in common."

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“What an old, ugly thing you are,” exclaimed Anabelle Lee with vexation. “Do you think I would let you touch me? I should say not. Why, with that big nose of yours, you would put out my eye, very probably.

“Besides,” she added, “what do you know about love? You are only a clown. You have such a look of being far away all the time. When one loves, one wishes to share everything. So do not imagine that I love you, because I wouldn’t share even so much as a caraway seed with you.”

“Very well,” said Mr. Aristotle angrily; “that’s the way it is, then. So just leave me alone, or perhaps you would like me to throw myself out of the window?”

“And just be so good as to pull down your skirts. You sit there with your legs in the air . . .”

XIII

MARY HOLLY

MARY HOLLY came downstairs to go for a walk with Papa Jonas. She found the puppet master seated in his bedroom, reading a treatise on Alchemy, by Eiranaeus Philalethes.

This ancient document interested him, because he felt that it did not mean exactly what it said. With the book open on his lap, he meditated upon the mysteries of Permanent Water, the Green and the Red Lion, the Gum of Gold, the Flower of Salt, the Shadow of Copper. He liked to believe that these terms concealed divine truths. Yet he blamed the old writers for

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their lack of candor. "After all," he thought, "it is one thing to say that the Corsufle must be roasted seven times; but it is quite another thing to know what you mean by it."

Seeing Mrs. Holly standing in the doorway, he put down his book and remarked: "How young and fresh you look in your light dress with its colors of spring. No one would take you to be the grandmother of Anabelle Lee and Mr. Aristotle."

And he added, "How are they getting along?"

"Oh, quite well," said Mrs. Holly.

How young and small she looked, he thought—almost as small as Amy May. And all at once he felt sorry for Mary Holly—sorry for her youth, already touched with sobriety, youth with its hopes turned a little sour, youth so early tired and a little

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lonely, troubled no less by dreams—troubled, perhaps, all the more . . .

“What are we going to do with you, Mary Holly?” he thought.

She stood smiling at him out of her bright, dark eyes. Then she said shyly, and with a gulp,

“Papa Jonas . . . can’t you give me some one to play with, too?”

Papa Jonas closed his book, and looked out of the window. “What would you like,” he asked gently; “an old puppet master?”

“Well . . .” said Mrs. Holly.

“I have only a young poet left,” said Papa Jonas.

Mrs. Holly twisted her stubby fingers together. “Oh,” she said, “a poet . . .” She threw out her hands. “It’s so much easier with dolls,” she said. “Haven’t you

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a doll for me, Papa Jonas? A doll like Mr. Aristotle, who would be the doctor and the grocer and . . . and whatever I wanted him to be?"

Papa Jonas looked slowly around the room, at the puppets hanging from the walls with droll or serious expressions. "No," he said at last, "there is no one here like that. Each of these little beings is himself, and nothing else. He has his own motions to make, and that is all he is able to do. That is the way he is made."

He added gravely, "When I take him down, I put him back on the same nail again."

Mrs. Holly made a pattern on the floor with the toe of her shoe.

"What would happen," she asked, "if you took him down and didn't put him back?"

Papa Jonas shook his head. "I do not

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know," he said. "Perhaps I should not be able to find him again when I went to look for him."

"You mean," said Mrs. Holly, "he might get lost?"

"Yes," said Papa Jonas.

Mrs. Holly did not look up. "And a poet," she asked faintly, "does he hang on a nail, too?"

She herself supplied the answer. "I suppose he does," she said in a whisper; "I suppose we all do . . ."

She turned to the wall, from which the resigned face of Mr. Moses peered down at her. "Well," she cried uncertainly, "where's your poet, Papa Jonas?"

Papa Jonas did not reply at once. At last he said gently, "Are you sure that you want a poet, my child, and not a grocer or a doctor?"

MARY HOLLY

"No," said Mrs. Holly, "I'm not sure. But it's all you said you had."

"Then let me tell you something about a poet," said Papa Jonas. "He lives in a strange land. There all the paths are crooked; and everything seems a little nearer or a little farther than it really is. So he is always groping for what he cannot reach, or starting off to find what is right under his nose. It is a lonely land, lonely in the way that dreams are lonely, grotesque and shadowy. You must forgive the poet if his eyes are full of dreams. He is like one who wakes from sleep; you must not expect him to be companionable. Take him in your arms, and do not wake him too suddenly."

Mrs. Holly sighed. "Perhaps," she said, "he'd better go on sleeping."

"Perhaps he had," said Papa Jonas.

XIV

IN WHICH MRS. ARISTOTLE SUFFERS A DISAPPOINTMENT

ANABELLE LEE was not discouraged by the rebuff she had received from Mr. Aristotle. If anything, her passion increased for the little wooden clown with the long red nose, who regarded her with such a severe expression. When she looked at him, she experienced an emotion which amounted almost to pain, for it occurred to her that he was beautiful. She was exacting, and without charm; nevertheless, love made her bold, and she asked for and received in imagination the most ardent caresses.

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In the morning she said to him:

“How do you feel to-day, my dear?”

“Not so good,” replied Mr. Aristotle. His sober face gave no indication of his thoughts. As a matter of fact, they were confused and alarming. Mr. Aristotle knew that to be happy one must not desire anything in this world. On the other hand, it was impossible to ignore the glances cast at him by his wife. And he was obliged to admit that he was not exactly cold to her. The sight of her lean and supple body filled him with the most conflicting emotions. He was happy and unhappy together; he felt that he was no longer master of himself, and this thought, which frightened him, did not entirely displease him.

When he saw his wife looking at him, he adopted a gloomy air, and remarked:

“No, I do not feel very well to-day.

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Still, that is the way with a man who uses his mind as much as I do."

So saying, he uttered a thoughtful sigh. Anabelle Lee replied that she did not object to a man using his mind, if anything ever came of it. "But the way it is with you," she said, "you simply sit, and think about what? Nothing of any use."

And in a drowsy voice, sweet as honey, she added, "You should try to live a little. You should have some experiences. Because, after all, what do you know about life?"

"I know this much," said Mr. Aristotle: "that one must live in the mind in order to be happy, and not in the body. In the mind alone is to be found peace combined with enthusiasm. The passions of the body are intoxicating."

"Yes," murmured Anabelle Lee, and held

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up her mouth for a kiss. Mr. Aristotle repulsed her with indignation.

“No, really,” he said, “do you think I am made entirely of wood?”

Anabelle Lee replied that every one knew that Mr. Aristotle had been a great rowdy in his day. She did not add that it was for this reason that she had married him, because it was unnecessary, and she would have denied it. Instead, she began to cry; tears fell from her one eye, made out of a shoebutton, and she exclaimed,

“You are a monster. What a wretch.”

Mr. Aristotle received her reproaches in silence. When she was done, he said wearily:

“I can assure you that the effect of your tears is not what you expect.”

At once Anabelle Lee dried her eye, and remarked,

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"I do not expect anything. Whatever gave you such a ridiculous notion? I am crying probably because I have a cold. So do not imagine anything else."

All the rest of the day Mr. Aristotle maintained a thoughtful silence. He appeared to be thinking of something profound. As a matter of fact, he was thinking of Anabelle Lee's face, stained with tears, pouting and disconsolate. He wished to make her weep again, but he would have preferred to make her weep with gratitude. And as, in imagination, he first vanquished and then consoled her, he experienced the most painful sensations.

"You know," he said to himself, "that one eye of hers . . . well, really, after a while it is hard to think of anything else."

Morning passed into afternoon, and afternoon drew to a close. Mr. and Mrs.

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Aristotle had their tea with Amy May and Jane Demonstration: the sun sank behind the houses, and the sparrows twittered. In the streets the sound of people hurrying home rose like a tide, and ebbed away; lights were lit; and odors of cooking mingled in the wind. Overhead, in the clear sky, the moon, cut like a melon by the earth's invisible shadow, sailed for the west, determined and serene. And in her little room on Barrow Street, Amy May said her prayers:

“From goolies and ghosties,
From things that go bump . . .”

She slept, her closed, dream-heavy eyes turned toward the chair where she had thrown Anabelle Lee and Mr. Aristotle one on top of the other.

“You are hurting me,” cried Anabelle Lee, “with your sharp elbow.”

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Mr. Aristotle did not reply. The night was still, still as the little cavern of his breast. The noises of the streets came drowsily to his ears; a faint, sweet wind caressed his nose, half sea, half flowers. The city seemed to draw away, to rumble in the distance, lulled by her two great rivers, watched by the moon.

"There is music in all this," thought Mr. Aristotle, "but I cannot hear it." He lay quiet, listening: it seemed to him as if the night were playing somewhere, far away. It seemed to him as if he, too, had been given a part in that music so pure, so touching, so filled with pain. In the darkness he trembled gently. "It is the music of life," he said, "lonely, beautiful, and mysterious."

"It is the music of love," said Anabelle Lee. And she brushed his lips with her soft, painted mouth.

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Outside, moonlight covered the earth with mist. The houses stood close to each other, black and silver, austere, and dreamy. In the corner of the room where the two dolls were lying, shadows began to gather, humming with inaudible voices, shaken with imperceptible movement. They seemed to come stealing from all parts of the house, up the stairs, in the windows, expectant, joyous, and frightened. Summoned once before by Papa Jonas, they had come to celebrate the marriage of two little dolls.

Mr. Aristotle sighed. "It is love," he repeated. And he added in a whisper, "Yes, I love you. Do you understand? I love you. You are beautiful and slender, you attract me, you terrify me. I cannot resist any longer. Life has thrown us together, one on top of the other."

"Do not talk so much," breathed Ana-

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belle Lee. Her arms twined around Mr. Aristotle's neck. With a long sigh they abandoned themselves to the transports of passion.

Their kisses, without sound, wounded and charmed the sylphs who thronged about them with tears of joy and longing. Anabelle Lee expected to be embraced by a satyr, like those who had pursued the nymphs in the forests. She was mistaken; and disappointed, and with a tear in her eye, she exclaimed at last in accents of chagrin:

“What is the matter with you?”

Mr. Aristotle remained silent, wooden, and mortified. “What,” he said to himself, “is it possible that I have been mistaken about myself?” His heart began to beat with fright.

“Perhaps,” he thought, “it is because I

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have been a philosopher. Perhaps it is because I have thought so much."

He began to tell Anabelle Lee about his youth. "I was a fine fellow once," he declared, "I assure you . . ."

But Anabelle Lee did not wish to hear him. "I have a headache," she said; "what do I care what you were once? Go to sleep, and do not bother me."

And she turned her face, flushed and disconsolate, to the wall.

Mr. Aristotle lay quiet at her side, a profound sadness bathing his heart. He thought of the past, of Papa Jonas' dusty workshop; he remembered how Christopher Lane used to sing as he pasted together bits of wood and cloth. "Those were happy times," he said to himself: "I hung upon a nail, with my friends. They understood, and respected me. How peaceful it seems to me

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now, as I look back at it. Nothing happened from day to day; nothing was expected of me. Yet at the same time it was believed that nothing was too much for me."

He sighed. "Yes," he thought, "I was happy then. I felt a longing for something I did not know; and for that reason everything seemed beautiful and wonderful to me. The songs Christopher Lane used to sing touched my heart, filled with vague desires."

He remembered the nights when he had danced about the stage, drawn by the strings in Papa Jonas' hand. "How gay it was," he thought: "that was really romantic. I performed great feats, and I was quite irresponsible. That is the way life should be for a man like myself. Papa Jonas worked the strings, and my adventures delighted every one.

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“I think I will go back to Papa Jonas, since I am not adapted to a life like this. After all, I am a philosopher, which is to say that I look on life from a distance, and by myself.

“For such purposes there is nothing better than a nail in the wall.”

XV

MR. ARISTOTLE RETURNS TO THE SCENES OF HIS YOUTH

MR. ARISTOTLE returned to the workshop. The next morning Papa Jonas discovered the little clown lying on the floor, among the shavings. The puppet master called his assistant, and together they picked him up and set him on the table.

“Christopher,” said Papa Jonas to the poet, “our bridegroom has come back to us. He is unhappy, and he returns to his friends for comfort. He wishes to regain, among the scenes of his youth, an assurance lost, alas, forever. Life is not at all what he ex-

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pected; and reality has destroyed his illusions."

"Come," said Christopher seriously, and in a low voice, "what do you think has happened to him, Papa Jonas?"

Papa Jonas looked for a long time at the little puppet, who gazed back at him with a mute and sorrowful expression. "I believe," said Papa Jonas, "that Mr. Aristotle and Anabelle Lee did not get along very well together. That is what I was afraid of in the first place. After all, men and women have certain duties to perform toward one another. They would like to believe that love is gentle, tender, and easily satisfied. It is illusions such as these which create the most terrible tragedies. As a matter of fact, love is an astonishing emotion which changes the appearance as well as the character of its possessor. I am

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speaking now of physical love, Christopher, my son."

Christopher replied that love was like anything else; one must not get too near, if one wished to see it. "That's true of everything," he said; "life is like that, Papa Jonas."

"I do not doubt it," said Papa Jonas; "yet these metaphysical abstractions do not help us to live, What is more, they do not satisfy women, who are more practical than men."

He hung Mr. Aristotle on his old nail in the wall. "There," he said; "you see, our clown is home again. When Amy May comes to ask for him, I shall tell her that he wishes to spend a few days with his old friends. But now let us get to work; we have still some trees to make, and the tail of a dragon."

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At twelve o'clock Papa Jonas and Christopher went out to lunch. And a drowsy quiet prevailed in the workshop, warmed at that hour by the noonday sun.

From his nail on the wall, Mr. Aristotle looked about him; there were his friends in their places, just as he remembered them. "Well," he said, "how are you all?" They did not reply; and it seemed to him that they turned away their heads. "What," he said, "have you nothing to say to me? Aren't you glad to see me?"

With an assumption of cheerfulness, he added, "Come, what is the news hereabouts? You will allow me to say that you seem a little quiet. Has anything happened?"

"As for me," he continued, since no one spoke, "I have lived a bit. Yes, I have seen a little something of life. Here, everything

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is rosy. But out there—" he made a gesture with his arm—"out there, life is different, it is real, and terrifying. I can tell you, I have seen some things. . . ."

He turned to Mr. Moses, who hung beside him with a great scratch across his chin. "What has happened to you, my friend," he asked, "and why do you look at me so gloomily?"

"Why?" said Mr. Moses. "Just listen to him. I'll tell you why. But first of all, please do not call me your friend any more. I heard what you said, I took your advice: that's what's the matter. You said I was too sober, so what did I do? Fool that I am, I tried to give Ophelia a good squeeze when no one was looking. Would you like to know what happened then? Why, simply this: that mad fellow Hamlet came after me. And when he was finished, all the rest

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of them began to beat me, out of dislike for my looks.”

“Yes,” exclaimed Sancho Panza, “but do you mean to deny that the Jews killed Christ? I do not intend to forgive them for it. Just wait—you’ll catch it again, at the very first opportunity. But as for your friend here, I for one would never have known him again. He’s changed; that’s a fact. Still that’s what marriage does for a man.”

At this point Angelica broke into the conversation. “Why,” she said to Mr. Aristotle, “you look just like a clown: one wants to laugh at you. You do not look at all like a philosopher any more. For one thing, your nose is bigger, and redder, and lends an expression of grief to your face, which is very comical.”

And from different parts of the room a

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sound of laughter arose, like the titter of elves.

“Oh, oh . . . the clown is back.”

“He is all nose.”

“What an ugly fellow.”

“See—he has suffered. Well, that’s comical.”

“Hahaha.”

Mr. Aristotle hung his head. “Do you think I have changed so much?” he asked, timidly. “I feel the same: or at least, almost the same.”

“One can see,” said Don Quixote in a voice like cold wind far away, “that you have changed. Once you had an air of the Schools about you. Now you look like a clown. Perhaps you have been enchanted. What have you been doing with yourself?”

Mr. Aristotle looked up. “I have been unhappy,” he said simply: “I have lived.”

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Again the laughter arose, mischievous and without pity.

“He has lived.”

“O my, O my.”

“Look, he is weeping.”

“Oh, what a funny clown.”

“Well, but after all—what is he doing here?”

“Go back to your wife, you silly fellow.”

And Hamlet added in his melancholy voice, “It is a fact that if, as you say, you have lived, you no longer belong here.”

Mr. Aristotle sighed. “It is true,” he thought sadly, “I do not belong here any more. Why did I come back again? These wooden puppets do not understand me. Each has his own opinions: and each makes the world over to suit himself. There is no reality here; it is a roomful of dreams. How can Hamlet or Don Quixote know

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what it is like to be married to Anabelle Lee?"

And he said boldly: "Everything here is simply an illusion."

"Yes?" replied Don Quixote; "what of that? A man without illusions is of no use to any one. Look at me: here, on my nail in the wall, I remain courageous and invincible. Nothing can harm me, because, for one thing, Papa Jonas would not allow it."

But that did not please Orlando the Furious. "Look here," he exclaimed in a hoarse voice, "why do you say that nothing can harm you, when you were beaten by everybody? All you did was to make a laughing-stock of yourself, and bring ridicule on the profession. No; you really ought to keep quiet for a change."

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"I was not exactly beaten by any one," replied Don Quixote quietly. "Sometimes my charger fell down; that can happen to anybody. Or now and then some magician managed to cast an enchantment over me. But I do not owe you anything; my instructor was the polite and elegant Amadis de Gaul, who could easily have split you open, like a peapod."

Hearing these words, Orlando, whose temper was short, leaped from his nail, and making a rush at Don Quixote, dealt him a terrific buffet over the ear, which stretched the poor gentleman flat upon his back. At once Sancho Panza began to cry for help. "They are murdering my master," he exclaimed. "Oh my." And his shouts mingled with the shrill cries of Ophelia, Electra and the Princess Angelica.

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From the floor, where he was being thumped by Orlando, Don Quixote's voice ascended calm and sorrowful:

"This also is an illusion."

Mr. Aristotle went sadly back upstairs. There he was greeted by Anabelle Lee who had been doing some thinking on her own account. "After all," she told herself, "he is a good fellow, although a little boastful. My goodness, what a baby he is; I can see that I will have to look after him." She hummed an air to herself. "How nice it is to be married," she thought. "And mine is best of all, since there is nothing carnal about it."

She allowed herself to blush.

When Mr. Aristotle returned, she gave him an affectionate smile. "Mr. A," she said, "you look a little tired. What a hard, wooden creature you are. I am going to

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make you a little waistcoat of rags and sawdust . . . well, never mind; rest a while. Put your head on my lap. There—would you like to go to sleep?”

And she began to sing,

“Do, do, do . . .”

Amy May found them in this position at tea time. “Isn’t it *sweet?*” she asked her mother. “Look how happy they are. Could you die?”

“I could just die,” said Mrs. Holly.

XVI

CHRISTOPHER LANE

PAPA JONAS and his assistant were seated on the roof of a 'bus, on their way uptown to the movies. It was not yet dark; overhead the sky was still faintly luminous. The great stores and office buildings rose stony and green into the air, while, at their feet, men and women, anxious to be home, hurried like shadow shapes in front of the shop windows glowing with color. The 'bus on which the old puppet master was seated plunged northward with the traffic; and he gazed proudly down upon the crowds. The wind rushed past him like a current of airy water, full

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of the shine of lights. "Well," he cried, "this is fine." And he took off his hat, which was in danger of blowing away.

Papa Jonas often went to the movies, to learn new gestures for his puppets. That is what he said, and he believed it. As a matter of fact, he liked the music and the pretty women; and he enjoyed watching the fighting and the courtship. Then he forgot that he was an old man; he imagined that he had the determined face and graceful manners of Mr. Tearle, or Mr. Meighan. He admired romance; he liked to believe that he was not too old for beauty.

At the first sight of the heroine, he experienced a lively satisfaction. But presently this wore off, and he began to dream; he lost track of the story, and thought, instead, of his own youth.

"Was I like that?" he thought, "so vivid

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and so droll? Was I like this boy who is sitting beside me with such a dreamy look on his face? Yes, I was like that. I am still like that, a little; that is how I can tell."

A certain sadness took possession of him, which was not disagreeable. It was the sadness of November remembering the roses of June. He realized in his heart that the roses were long dead; but it seemed to him that their fragrance survived. And he thought to himself:

"After all, age is not only a pattern of wrinkles. It is a quality of love; it is a weariness of heart. It is that point on the long journey to the grave at which we turn to look back over the road softened by the indulgent light of sunset. And our feet lead us gently forward, as our eyes retrace the way that we have come.

"It is the last clear twilight hour before

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night. The fields are still, and shadows envelop the woods where we so often lost our way. Behind us we can see the hills we climbed, lighted by the descending sun. In the calm evening air, they appear clear and close; they do not seem to be very far away.

"How beautiful they look against the sky. Still, one must remember how it was up there, now that the road leads down again. From those heights, so fresh and lofty, one saw only other hills, higher and far away."

After the performance Papa Jonas and his assistant hurried to refresh themselves with ice-cream and colored syrup. Then, with slower steps, they started home.

As they passed the Cathedral, Papa Jonas pointed to its spires gray with age, surmounted by a cross. "There," he said, "is a beautiful building. It fills me with peaceful and happy thoughts."

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He added: "One does not have to cherish the same hopes as the Bishop, in order to enjoy the austerity of its design."

Christopher Lane replied that with Papa Jonas' permission, he intended to devote himself to the shop windows across the way. He wished to look at dresses, and to imagine how they would appear on Mrs. Holly.

"The Reverend Doctor Twine," continued Papa Jonas, "believes that you and I have souls, Christopher, and that these souls can be detached from our bodies, after death. He says that we differ in this respect from the animals. Alas, we differ from the animals only in ingenuity. Life takes many forms; the form in which we end is not the same as that in which we begin. Men will have wings before so very long. They will need tails, to help them keep their balance in the air. Then the

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Reverend Doctor Twine will say that only men with tails and wings are able to have souls. And the airy creatures of the future will gaze in dismay at you and me, as we parade soberly up and down the streets of heaven."

"Look," said Christopher, pointing to a dress in the window; "there's a lovely thing."

Papa Jonas stared at his assistant in surprise. "Why, yes," he said, at last, "it is a lovely dress. But it is a little large for a puppet, Christopher, my son."

"Oh," said Christopher, "a puppet . . ."

And he smiled in confusion. "I suppose a dress like that would cost a great deal," he said.

Papa Jonas replied gravely, "If dresses are costly, it is for a good reason. The ribbons and bits of lace with which women

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decorate themselves, call attention to charms which must be exchanged for bread and butter. With the birds it is just the other way around; it is the male who must be gaily dressed. Where the worm comes up as easily for the hen as for the cock, it is the cock who must make himself attractive."

He added, "The time is coming when men will be obliged to wear silks and satins if they wish to win wives for themselves."

The effect of this announcement was to make Christopher anxious and gloomy. But Papa Jonas consoled him.

"A poet," he said, "does not need satin, or silk. In fact a poet should be a little untidy, if he wishes women to love him. His thoughts should be lofty, and his appearance disorderly. Then women will be unable to resist a desire to make him over, a little more tidily."

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“Yes,” said Christopher, “still, why not leave him alone?”

“Women,” replied Papa Jonas judicially, “are savage and vain. Like that unfortunate girl whose journal illuminates her sex, they wish to be Cæsar, Aurelius, Nero, Satan, and the Pope. They would like to be saint and sinner in the same breath, to fall and to be virtuous at the same moment. It is this agility of mind which drives a woman to ask for a poet, a grocer, and a doctor all rolled into one. And it is a fact that the poet is irresistibly drawn to this nonsensical creature who will never be content until she has brought him home from his strange and lovely country where, one must admit, he was not very happy.”

“That’s it,” said the young man, “if one were really happy there, Papa Jonas . . .”

XVII

PLAY ON SUNDAY

ON Sunday morning the city lay quiet in the sunshine. A few bells rang out, slow and heavy, high in the air above the drowsy houses, from whose chimneys wisps of smoke lazily ascended.

In the brownstone church on Barrow Street, the Reverend Doctor Twine conducted the Sabbath services. "Strengthen our hearts," he prayed, "and purify our minds. Lead us not into the lusts of the flesh; but help us to be truly humble. Amen."

"Amen," said the congregation. The organ pealed and the choir sang.

PLAY ON SUNDAY

Mrs. Holly and Christopher Lane sat together in a pew in the rear of the church, and listened to the singing and the praying. Their sunny, idle thoughts wandered in their heads; they smiled and dreamed. And Papa Jonas, in the house next door, sat at the window of his bedroom, and looked out at Amy May, who was playing in the street.

Seated beneath him on the stoop, Mr. Aristotle and Anabelle Lee exchanged polite conversation, and regarded the passers-by with inanimate faces.

"This is a lovely day," said Mr. Aristotle. "It is exactly the sort of day I like: it reminds me of Italy, where I spent a year with Papa Jonas. Have I ever spoken to you about it? That was the time when I created the part of Jonah and the Whale. We went everywhere, and we were received by some very exalted personages."

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"Yes," said Anabelle Lee languidly; "it's a fine day. I enjoy sitting here, and watching the people."

Mr. Aristotle favored his wife with a critical glance. "You have on your best dress," he said. "That seems hardly necessary to me."

"Why not?" asked Anabelle Lee. "It's Sunday, and people look to see what one has on. Do you expect me to go about in rags? Although, as far as that is concerned, you have on your good suit also, the one with the blue and yellow moons. Why, it is the suit you were married in. What a joke." And she laughed unpleasantly.

Mr. Aristotle sat up a little straighter. "Please remember," he said severely, "that a man in my position is apt to be seen, and that he must consider the impression he is

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making. For an artist, that is most important. Otherwise people are likely to think he is not doing so well."

"Very good, then," said Anabelle Lee. "But what about his wife, pray? If you are so important that people have to look at you . . . perhaps they will look at your wife also."

As Mr. Aristotle had nothing to say, she added tartly,

"Anyhow, do you really think it is you that people look at? I have my own opinion . . ."

And she stared boldly at a little boy whose face, adorned with freckles, was to be seen at that moment at the bottom of the stoop.

The little boy stopped and stared back at her. Presently he let out a long whistle; then he began to scratch his head.

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"You see," said Anabelle Lee to her husband.

Mr. Aristotle regarded her gloomily. "Of course," he said, "when you glance so boldly with your eye . . ."

Anabelle Lee tossed her head. "That's my affair," she said; "the way I do it."

"What a vain thing you are," said Mr. Aristotle.

But he was obliged to admit that his wife was attractive. "Yes," he said to himself as he looked at her, "she has a certain charm. As a rule I do not care for slender women, but there is something about this one . . ."

And he reflected that in the presence of a charming woman art does not get so much attention.

Amy May was playing hopscotch. She made circles and squares on the sidewalk, and jumped around. The little boy with

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the freckles watched her as she hopped first on one foot, and then on the other. At last he remarked:

“Say.”

Amy May stood with her feet on either side of a small circle of chalk, and looked at him with hopeful eyes. “Do you want to play?” she asked.

“That’s a silly game,” he replied. “Jump, jump, jump . . .” So saying he also began to leap about in the circles and squares.

“I could do that on one leg,” he assured her.

Amy May stopped jumping because there was no room for her. Instead she remarked after a silence:

“I have two dolls.”

The little boy nodded; he had seen them. He replied that, as for that, he himself had a knife with two blades.

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"My dolls' names are Anabelle Lee and Mr. Aristotle," said Amy May.

"Those aren't names at all," said the freckled one. He paused, and gazed thoughtfully at the sky. "I can whistle," he announced, "and hold my nose."

He did, for a while.

However, Amy May was not discouraged. "Let's play house," she said. "I'll be the mother, and you can be the father."

"No," said the youth. He preferred to whistle; but presently he changed his mind. "What's your name?" he asked.

Amy May told him. He appeared to be satisfied, yet longed to distinguish himself. "Let's play cowboys and Indians," he said. "I'll be the Indians."

With that he began to dance about, uttering bloodcurdling whoops. His movements

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caused Miss Holly nothing but embarrassment.

"No," she cried. "I'll tell you what . . . let's play doctor."

She hurried to describe the advantages of a game which would allow her to be a trained nurse, and wear a white cheesecloth head-dress. However, doctor, did not suit the boy with the freckles. He wished to be active, and to come off with something to his advantage. "Look at me," he said. And going up four steps of the stoop, he leaped off, and arrived at the pavement with a thump.

"Let's play house," said Amy May. After all, that was the proper game for Sunday.

She received no encouragement. The youth with the freckles had caught a

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glimpse of glory; and he did not intend to be done out of it. Climbing up the stoop again, he turned at the sixth step, and looked down at her. "Can you do this?" he asked.

Amy May shook her head. "No," she answered truthfully, and without enthusiasm.

"Well," said the youth. And he launched himself with a terrified face into the air. His arrival at the street was precipitate; even his chin got a crack.

"There," said Amy May. "Now look at you. I told you."

The little boy with the freckles rose painfully to his feet. "Did not," he said. His eyes were full of tears, but he managed to smile. "Did not," he said again. To show his scorn, he put his fingers to his nose.

As he walked away, his whistle rose shrill but wavy to the sky.

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Amy May went back to the house, and sat down with her children on the stoop. And Papa Jonas, looking down from his window, beheld all three, Amy May, Anabelle Lee, and Mr. Aristotle, sitting in silence, their faces turned toward the retreating youth with the freckles, from whose distant, puckered mouth ascended flights of unimaginable sound.

XVIII

THE SEA-GOING HACK

C HRISTOPHER had sold a poem to the *Century Magazine*. Surprised and joyous, but able to be modest, and with a look of dignity, he came to tell Mrs. Holly the news. As he stood in the doorway, he seemed to wish to say: It is nothing: there is no need to put on any airs. Still, there it is: not everybody sells a poem to the *Century*.

Mrs. Holly was washing the supper plates. They were cheap and heavy, but their rims were painted with flowers. She doused them in hot water without soap, and

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rubbed them with a little mop, for she felt that soap made them too slippery. As she ducked each one and scrubbed it, she puckered up her mouth and frowned earnestly.

"Oh," she thought, "dishes . . ."

"Look," said Christopher from the doorway; "what do you think . . . ?"

Mrs. Holly shook her head. There was no good trying to talk; when she had dishes to do, she might as well have had a mouthful of pins. There was still the drying and the putting away to be got on with; then she would be free to think, when it was all over.

"I've sold a poem," said Christopher.

Mrs. Holly's stubby hands fell into the hot water with a plump. "No," she exclaimed.

"Yes," said the poet. He wanted to celebrate, to go on a spree. "Look," he

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said again: "let's charter a sea-going hack, and drive around the park."

"Tst," said Mrs. Holly ironically, "you do think of the swellest things to do."

"And then," continued Mr. Lane bravely, "go dancing . . ."

Mrs. Holly gazed at him in awe. "How much did you get?" she asked in a faint voice.

Christopher looked down at his feet. "I got," he said, "about ten dollars. It wasn't a very long poem."

Mrs. Holly's face remained bright, dark, and happy. But, in silence, and with a sigh, she kissed, as she put it, the dancing good-bye.

"Come on," she said; "wait till I get my hat."

And as she peeked in at Amy May, already asleep, her hand curled like a petal

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under her warm, pink cheek, she murmured:

“Your mother’s off on a spree, my dear, in a sea-going hack.”

They found a victoria at the corner. “How much,” Christopher began, “would you charge . . . ?” But then he stopped; he had ten dollars; he meant to celebrate his glory; it would be sad to haggle.

He helped Mrs. Holly to get in, then waved his hand toward the north. “To the park,” he said to the coachman, “and then drive around . . .”

Proud and gay, he scrambled in after her, and sat down. At once the carriage, smelling of stables and old harness, started with a swoop up the long avenue toward the park.

The air blew softly against their faces, the city air in spring, filled with a far-off clang and hum, with faint shouts and tunes.

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They lay back on the cushioned seat, the carriage rocked gently, and they gazed up at the sky, green with night.

They were quiet and happy. The horse ran on with a steady trot, trot, trot; the figure of the coachman sailed through the gloom above them like the mast of a ship: and they followed with shy and smiling thoughts, like the thoughts of children.

“Are you warm?”

“Oh, quite.”

“It’s rather fun, isn’t it.”

“Yes . . . isn’t it.”

It was like running away, she thought, running easily and peacefully away from dishes and other cares . . . If only, she hoped, no one saw her—that would quite spoil the warmth and tingle she was feeling, sitting next to the poet in the sea-going hack, with its almost sly motion,

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rocked on its springs, through the night.

Later, perhaps, in the park, when the city was only walls and lights far off against the sky, if their hands touched, the heart's quick leap . . .

It must be just for them, at any rate . . .
for no one else to see . . .

"Sleepy?"

"I'm sleep's best girl . . ."

"Well—lie back, then . . ."

He tried to keep the quiver out of his voice. But his mouth was dry, and his voice shook. It seemed to him as if the night had grown smaller and closer, as if the sky were full of eyes and ears, all looking and listening. "Well, Christopher," they seemed to say, "we're waiting to see . . . we're waiting to hear . . ." He wanted to cry out. "What is it you want me to do?" It seemed to him as if an answer came back out of

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the night: "Here is beauty; come, break off a little before it's taken away from you, to keep when this is gone . . ."

He knew what they meant; he knew what that beauty was. He was a young man, and a poet. Love sat like a weight in his throat; and his heart began to thump. His cold, blind hand met hers; their fingers danced shyly a moment, and then suddenly clasped, ardent and trembling. Feeling a little giddy, he leaned forward; the shadow of his head fell over her face; and in silence, while their bodies rocked with the carriage, their lips met; the night's eyes closed, the night's ears were suddenly stuffed against hearing . . .

Well, there it was, finally . . . Now where was Greece, and India, and the other side of the moon? All in arm's reach.

Christopher leaned back again, shivery,

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happy, and confused. He wished to sing, and wondered what to do next. He lifted his hand, and looked with embarrassment at Mrs. Holly's fingers, squeezed white, tangled in his own. He bent to kiss them.

"Sweet," he murmured. And he glanced shyly up at her out of the corners of his eyes.

"Oh my," she thought. "What a creature."

She caught his head suddenly to her breast. "You're a funny child," she whispered. "Do you know about that?"

"Yes," he said meekly; and he kissed her again, vaguely, a little above the stomach, where his face was pressed.

The bundled coachman, austere and lonely, swam on before them, up hills and down; without noticing they followed, in and out of lamplight; now her head was

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pressed against his shoulder, now his cheek leaned upon her hair.

The fragrance of flowers, of bushes in bloom, mingled with the odor of earth rising from the ground, cold with the dew of early spring. On the benches, under the trees, couples embraced in the shadows. The city sounds died away.

She was the first to speak of anything. Drowsy with kisses, she wished to be helpful; she wanted to begin to take care of him. "Tell me about your poem," she said. And she sat up, with a smile, to arrange her hair.

He had forgotten about his poem; now he remembered with pride that he was a poet. "It was nothing," he murmured; and gazed with longing at her hands as they patted her straying hair with light but clumsy gestures.

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"You're so sweet . . ."

Mary Holly laughed. Now that she was the pursued, she meant to tease him a little.

"Is that all? Nothing?"

"No," he said with a frown, for he wished all at once to be impressive, "no . . . it was all this" . . . he waved his hand at the night . . . "to-night, and you and me."

"You and me," said Mrs. Holly faintly. "Yes . . . tell me about you and me."

Christopher looked out at the rocks and trees, the dark and empty lawns.

What, after all, was there to tell?

He stared unhappily before him. "You and me"—that meant something for to-morrow, and the next day . . . it meant having money . . .

Her hand crept down to his, to coax and encourage him. "Yes," she whispered.

"Don't you know?"

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“No—do I?”

She must have guessed, for she drew him close again. “Never mind,” she said. And her lips brushed his cheek, so young, unhappy, and severe.

He was grateful but gloomy. He wanted to say, “I love you,” but what he said was simply,

“You know; I’m so poor . . .”

She nodded her head soberly. Yes, she knew—she had thought of it before.

But what of that? Amy May would have his buttons, too, to put on, she thought. Three could live as cheaply as two and a white rabbit. It was spring; let the rest go.

She let herself sink down through her thoughts like a coin fallen in water, while Christopher, torn between humility and the need to be impressive, complained of his poverty, and boasted of the future. Clench-

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ing his fist, and waving it bravely before him, he exclaimed that he meant, presently, to write a great book.

"Of course you will. What will it be about?"

He didn't know, exactly. Nor was he, seeing that she agreed with him, so sure it would be all she hoped. Heavy-eyed with dreams, she roused herself to deny it. And for a while they argued softly,

"I'll never be able to."

"What nonsense. Yes, you will."

"Do you really, honestly, think so?"

"Of course I do. I know it."

Their voices, small and sweet in the darkness, faltered and rose and died away, his to doubt, hers to console, while their hearts, filled with the sap of spring, beat with the longing and the sadness of youth.

At last she put her stubby hand over his

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mouth. "Oh," she cried, weary of talking—"hush. You'll be great enough.

"And besides," she added, "what on earth's the difference?"

Arm in arm they returned to the city, past statues of famous men, stained by the pigeons.

XIX

IN WHICH A WHITE RABBIT GOES IN SEARCH OF LOVE

AMY MAY was going to give a play of her own. She meant to act in it herself, and be assisted by her daughter Anabelle Lee, Mr. Aristotle, and Jane Demonstration. "I'll be the Princess," she said, "and Anabelle Lee can be the old Queen."

There remained two actors without parts. Amy May did not intend to share the glory with every one. Mr. Aristotle and the rabbit would have to take what was left.

"They can be the Head Dragons," she declared.

The play had no plot; it concerned itself

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with a situation. What was to happen was not important; the main thing was the costumes. For herself Amy May found in her mother's closet a velvet hat and a chiffon veil. Thus arrayed, she regarded the queen dowager with disfavor.

"You ought to have a white crêpe-machine dress," she said.

Still in her royal robes, she sat down with a scissors and some cheesecloth, to make Anabelle Lee a dress of China silk.

While she cut and fitted and pinned, she set out to improve the action of the play. "Once upon a time," she began, "there was a princess named Elizabeth Eliza, who had an old mother called Mary Adams.

"Do you like being called Mary Adams, Anabelle Lee darling?" she inquired anxiously.

Anabelle Lee made no answer. Her

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feet were higher than her head; while from out a fold of cheesecloth, her one bright eye was bent upon Mr. Aristotle with a glance of speculation.

Amy May went on with her story. She explained that the Princess Elizabeth Eliza lived in a castle on a hill, with two Head Dragons named Freddy and Amelia, and her mother, Queen Mary Adams. They were happy; for nothing occurred to disturb them. They spent their mornings going to market, sweeping the floor, and changing their clothes. In the afternoon they used to walk in the garden, near the lake with the geraniums, or visit the grove where Tibby, the small yellow peacock, loved to sing like a canary.

One day as they stood together by the lake, looking out over its faucets at the box of geraniums, the queen dowager was aston-

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ished to observe a tear slide slowly down her daughter's nose, tremble at the tip, and fall with a splash into the water.

"Oh, good heavens," cried the queen; "what is the matter? Are you ill, Elizabeth Eliza?"

Pressed by her mother for the secret of her blushes and her tears, she confessed that she was in love. In faltering accents, and with a demure expression, she admitted to a tender feeling for the Head Dragon named Freddy.

When she remembered how much trouble dragons were to take care of, she wrung her hands. She was afraid that Freddy would not be suitable as a husband. The old queen hastened to console her daughter, whose tears by this time were falling like rain. "Never mind, Elizabeth Eliza," she said. She explained that Freddy was really

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a little boy with freckles who had been changed into a dragon by error. For one who knew the truth, it was a simple matter.

Joyous and singing, Elizabeth Eliza went home to prepare for the wedding. First she hurried to the grocer's and bought carrots, oatmeal, alphabets for soup, and some ginger snaps. A little while later, and after a large dinner, they were married. The effect of love on Freddy was all that could be hoped: he turned handsome, and made an excellent husband.

"That's Mr. Aristotle," Amy May explained.

"*Yah*," said Anabelle Lee in a low tone.

"Only," continued Amy May with a frown, "if Mr. Aristotle is going to be a dragon, I ought to sew him a little vest out of cotton, so as to make him look bigger."

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And seizing the unfortunate clown, she began to wad him out with cotton.

Anabelle Lee could scarcely restrain her joy at this sight. "You see," she said to Mr. Aristotle, "it's like what I told you; you're too hard and skinny."

Mr. Aristotle said nothing. As a matter of fact he was unable to speak, because of the cotton which covered his face, and in which he felt that he was smothering. He lay upside down on Amy May's lap, and he would have liked to weep with mortification.

"There," said Amy May, at last, "now you're better." She gave a pat to his absurd cotton belly. "Isn't he, Anabelle Lee?"

Mr. Aristotle hung his head. He was ashamed to look at any one. He felt that he had been made ridiculous, and his heart grew heavy with pity for himself. Poor

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Mr. Aristotle, he thought; they've done for you now. And he sank his long nose still deeper into the cheesecloth which wound about his body like a shroud.

But Anabelle Lee was quite overcome with mirth. "In all my life," she cried, "I never saw any one look so funny. Oh my. Oh my." And she burst out laughing.

The little clown's arms drooped sadly at his sides, while he kept his eyes averted from his wife. He could not bear to look at her; for he blamed her for everything. It is always the same, he told himself; just let a woman get hold of you, and it's all over. I might better be dead. . . .

He gave a gulp, there was such a lump in his throat.

As the day drew to a close, his heart grew heavier and heavier. The sadness of evening, with its drowsier sounds, its half heard

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voices in the air, its dismal drone, penetrated his soul. He thought of the glorious days of his youth, when he had been the favorite of all who frequented the little theatre near Ninth Avenue. As he heard again the laughter and the applause, he cried, "What, am I who created the part of Jonah and the Whale, to be simply a dragon with a cotton belly?"

"No," he exclaimed, "this is the end. Life has no longer anything to offer me. When one has lost one's place in the world, it is better to get out of it. Otherwise, one becomes simply rubbish."

And he looked at the window with a shudder.

Amy May did not believe that she had done anything unusual. At five o'clock she gave her dolls their tea, wiped their chins, and setting Mr. Aristotle down next to the

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rabbit hutch, went off to greet her mother.

"Did you have a nice day?" she asked.

"Are you tired?"

"Look, you have a button off your coat."

At dinner she informed Mrs. Holly that she was going to give a play. "You're invited," she said, "and Christopher and Papa Jonas and the Reverend Twine. It's about Elizabeth Eliza and a dragon."

Mrs. Holly nodded absent-mindedly. She was in a hurry to get Amy May off to bed, for she was going out with Christopher. She was dreamy and happy, and she hummed little tunes to herself.

"No bath to-night," she said.

Amy May looked up, a spoonful of prunes arrested half way to her mouth.

"For you or me?" she asked.

"Both," said Mrs. Holly promptly.

Amy May put down her prunes, and

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gazed at her mother with surprise. "Mother," she said solemnly, "that's dirty."

"Still," said Mrs. Holly, "suppose it is dirty? To-morrow we can scrub, to make up for it."

Amy May looked at her prunes for a long while. Presently the prunes began to swim about, dish and all; and a tear, a real tear, rolled down the Princess Elizabeth Eliza's nose, and fell, alas, not into the lake with the geraniums, but onto her bib.

"I don't want to be dirty," she sobbed. "I want to be clean and soapy. I want to smell nice and soapy."

At the sight of her daughter's tears, Mrs. Holly wrung her hands. "Don't cry," she exclaimed. "You can have a bath. You can have a picnic with your china dolls. You can have my best new soap."

Amy May's sobs ceased: she smiled a

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watery smile. "Excuse me," she said. Soon she was chatting as gaily as before, about her play.

Her voice, lifted joyously from the bath tub a little while later, made Mrs. Holly sigh as she bent above the dishes, wrist deep in soapy water. "Is he a scaly monster," she asked herself, "or just a little boy with freckles?"

That night, before she went out, she stood for a moment looking at herself in the mirror. As she gazed at the tired, brown face with its deepening lines and anxious eyes, a sudden rush of pity for herself, very rare in Mary Holly, came over her. "You poor thing," she said softly; "you poor silly thing—don't you know *anything*?"

She dropped a kiss on her face in the mirror. "Well," she sighed, "hold the truth."

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And pulling on her hat, she went out.

Mr. Aristotle stood, gloomy and alone, in front of the rabbit hutch. In the darkness he heard his wife's voice calling to him:

"Mr. Aristotle, where are you? Come here, and let me see your nice new cotton vest."

A little wave of laughter danced through the darkness like a ripple of water. Mr. Aristotle shook his head in helpless misery. To be laughed at was more than he could bear. Rage swelled his breast, under its swathing of cotton. "The trouble with me," he thought, "is that I have been too good humored. I have always tried to be a gentleman. Well, my nature is ruder than that. Now we shall see."

In harsh tones he called out to his wife: "Be still, you one-eyed monster, or I'll pinch you black and blue."

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A horrified gasp succeeded this announcement. In the silence which followed, Mr. Aristotle, his eyes swimming with tears, looked blindly around for something to lay hold of. He saw only the rabbit hutch, whose tenant peered out at him with surprise and reproach.

"Here," he said hoarsely, "get out of that." He bent down, and taking hold of the latch with stiff fingers, pulled the door open. "You," he cried out to Anabelle Lee, "do you see what I am doing? What do you think of it?"

Jane Demonstration, quiet and dignified, crept slowly forth. She would have liked to say something; however, she remained silent. Without bestowing a glance on Mr. Aristotle, she passed out of the kitchen into the hall. Anabelle Lee began to scream.

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"Amy May," she shrieked, "Amy May; look what he's doing. Oh heavens."

But Amy May was fast asleep. Jane Demonstration crept on, wary but curious. She saw steps; they led down, perhaps into some dreamed-of hole in the ground. Down she went too, hop, a tiny white figure with bright, anxious eyes. The door of the house stood open. She passed out onto the street.

Before her lay the city, shining with many lights. The night leaped out above her, pressed down on her with shadows, with toppling houses, with strange, moving shapes. A sweet amazement woke in her breast, her virgin heart trembled with apprehension and desire. This, then, was life; it made her giddy, it terrified but it enchanted her.

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At her feet yawned a great hole, into whose mysterious depths, black as ink, another flight of steps descended. She peered into it; nothing was to be seen. Nevertheless, she felt a thrill. "Perhaps I shall find love down there," she thought; she had heard so much about it. And down she went, hop, hop.

Alas, poor Jane, your bright pink eyes will gaze no more upon this world. Already your soul draws near its Maker, with gentle leaps. From the cellar ascends a low whine; a shaggy form lifts itself from the floor. That growl you hear is not the voice of love, poor Jane. Love's teeth are sharp, but not so sharp as these. Love hurts, my little rabbit, but not so much . . . not so much . . .

Back in the house at No. 12 Barrow

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Street, Mr. Aristotle stood without moving beside the empty rabbit hutch. "Oh my," he thought. "Oh my goodness—now I'll get it . . . now I'll get it . . ."

XX

MR. ARISTOTLE MAKES HIS DECISION

PAPA JONAS called his assistant into the workshop. "Christopher, my son," he said, "I am afraid that your mind is not on your work." So saying he showed him the puppet Sancho Panza with the dragon's tail tied to his rear.

Mr. Lane gave a start of dismay. He felt that he was guilty, and he was overcome with confusion. As a matter of fact, Papa Jonas had attached the dragon's tail to Sancho Panza himself, in order to have a reason for scolding his assistant.

He continued: "Yes, your thoughts are

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elsewhere. Perhaps they are upstairs. I see that you are blushing. Well, tell me, what are your intentions; do you mean to be married?"

"Yes, sir," mumbled Christopher.

"I am glad of that," said Papa Jonas; "although I do not see how you intend to get along."

"Well," said Christopher, "that's it: I don't know either. I have to make some money, that's all there is to it. I'll have to give up the puppets."

"That is too bad," declared Papa Jonas; "they will miss you. I shall miss you too, Christopher, my son. Tell me what you mean to do."

The young man shook his head. "I don't know," he said. "We thought of going west; one can live out there on very little, and it would be good for Amy May, the

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sun and the sea. But what could I find to do out there? There's not much work in the west."

Papa Jonas replied thoughtfully: "I have often thought of going to California. I should like to take my puppets to San Francisco, or Santa Barbara. One could build a little Grecian theatre, and perform the works of Æschylus, or Heron of Alexandria, at the foot of green hills, by the side of an ocean blue as the Ægean."

He sighed and continued: "However, I am growing old. I do not know if I care to leave this place, where I have lived so many years. The trip is a long one; and at my age, I do not look forward to making new friends. Still, it is a dream I have long cherished. Perhaps you will take it over now, Christopher, my son. If you like, I will give you half my dolls, and set you up

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in business in the west. Then, at least, my puppets will not be idle."

Christopher was unable to reply. Seizing Papa Jonas' hand, he mumbled a few words, and hung his head.

"Do not try to thank me," said Papa Jonas; "for the joy is also on my side. I shall be happy to think that my puppets are performing in the theatre I should have liked to build for them. But first of all, you had best talk it over with Mrs. Holly. Stay here; I will go up and get her."

As he climbed the stairs to Mrs. Holly's apartment, he thought to himself, "I will ask Amy May to let me have Mr. Aristotle again. Then I will give something simple, like Jonah and the Whale. That will amuse me; I can do it alone; and Mr. Aristotle makes an excellent Jonah, with a curly beard."

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He found Amy May in bed with a cold. She had been out all afternoon in the rain, looking for Jane Demonstration; and when her mother came home, she was flushed with fever. She had her dolls on the pillow with her, and Mrs. Holly to look after her, but her nose kept running, and she presented a piteous appearance. She lay under the comforter with Anabelle Lee and Mr. Aristotle, and took her china dolls on little excursions across the waves she made with her knees. The dolls were seated in the same rowboat which used to make nightly trips to the Island of Geraniums; now and then it upset, and they floated on the woolen water without discomfort.

Amy May looked at Papa Jonas with a serious expression. "What do you think," she said; "Jane Demonstration is gone; isn't that distracting?"

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Papa Jonas replied to Amy May with expressions of sympathy. "I am sure that we all join," he said, "in feeling this loss. Still, it is a loss, that can, perhaps, be repaired. Would you like another rabbit, or a furry kitten? Or would you like a little parrot, to keep Tibby company?"

Amy May clapped her hands. But then her face fell. In a snuffly voice she explained that Mrs. Holly had forbidden her to have any more pets, because they were so much trouble to take care of. "Well," she admitted, "I suppose it was wrong of me to go out and get a cold. That's error, Papa Jonas. So perhaps I'd better not have anything."

Papa Jonas smiled. "I do not wish to quarrel with your mother's decisions," he said. "Perhaps she will let me bring you a doll to take the place of your lost rabbit."

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Amy May was delighted; she wanted to know at once what sort of doll it was to be. "A boy doll," she said, for she did not wish to share her affection for Anabelle Lee with another female.

Papa Jonas declared that he would bring her a boy doll. "The one I have in mind," he said, "is handsome and young, but I do not need him, since the hero of my next play is to be an old man."

"Which old man?" asked Amy May. "Is it Mr. Moses?"

"No," replied Papa Jonas. "I will tell you in your ear, because it is a secret." He bent to whisper, and they both looked with smiles at Mr. Aristotle.

But the little clown did not notice their whispers and their smiles. He was lying on the pillow next to his wife, who did not find him very attractive in his new vest. "My,

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but you're plain," she declared. He replied that it was her fault, because she had wished him to have a vest of cotton. "Well," she admitted, "perhaps I did. Still, I didn't mean you to look so funny."

Mr. Aristotle wished to say, "Oh, is that so?" However, he remained silent. When he looked at his wife, his heart sank. "So," he thought; "there's to be a new one now for you to make eyes at."

He did not need to look at her, for wherever he turned, there he saw her one eye, glittering like a shoebutton. "Yes," he thought; "that is what makes her so unusual. At first it is nothing, but then it begins to grow on you."

When he saw in his mind that eye turned upon another, he grew sad and dizzy.

"Did you hear, Mr. A?" said Anabelle Lee; "we're going to have a young man with

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us. Hm." And she gazed with thoughtful pleasure at the box in the corner where her dresses were kept.

"She doesn't mean to waste any time," thought Mr. Aristotle. He looked gloomily at his cotton waistcoat, under which his stomach felt empty and hollow. "You are not very kind to me," he said.

Anabelle Lee did not wish to be interrupted in her reflections, which were agreeable and amusing. "No, really," she exclaimed, "you're too absurd. Why do you bother me? I should like to rest a little, and get some color into my cheeks."

"You look very pretty as you are," said Mr. Aristotle. He wished to take her hand, but she drew it away. "Do you know," he continued, "you are really quite a handsome woman. We could be extremely happy together, you and I. I should like to take

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you away somewhere, to Italy, or California. The sea is as blue as paint, and the sun shines all the time. Do you like to swim? One floats about on the water like a cork, and the seagulls come down with sharp cries to see if there is anything to eat. Well—look out for your eye; they will peck it out.”

And he gave a croak, which he meant to sound like laughter.

Anabelle Lee was thinking of something else. “Who will it be, do you imagine?” she asked. “Just fancy if it should be Orlando, or Romeo.”

Mr. Aristotle hurried on, confused and unhappy. “If we went to Italy,” he said, “we could walk in the country, and live on cakes and wine. The Italians know how to appreciate art: you would soon see what a fine actor I am. To tell you the truth, this

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is no place for an actor to live. It is always raining or snowing here. In Italy you will have roses to wear every day, and I will buy you a red shawl and a pair of coral earrings."

His voice shook with eagerness. Now that his wife was about to meet a fine young man, he felt that he loved her. He believed that she was attractive and he could not bear to have her think of any one else. He remembered how she had always wished to kiss him, and how he had repulsed her. "What a fool I was," he thought to himself; "she loved me; what did I want? No one else will ever love me so much."

He thought of how she had taken his head on her lap when he had returned from the workshop. "How kind she is," he told himself; "what a gentle and womanly nature. Really, she is a gem. I am lucky to have

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such a wife. How nice it is to be married. I will take her away somewhere where there are no young men."

And he said to her in a low and humble voice: "I have been stupid, I have hurt you. Well, that is all over now. I love you; we will go away and be happy together."

Anabelle Lee did not reply. As a matter of fact, she had not heard a word Mr. Aristotle had said. She was thinking of her clothes, and trying to decide what to wear. "I wish I had another eye," she thought: "to have only one eye is not an advantage."

"Anabelle Lee," said Mr. Aristotle in a whisper, "look at me. I love you; will you go away with me? We will steal out of here to-night, when every one is sleeping. We will cross the ocean, and go to Italy."

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Anabelle Lee looked at Mr. Aristotle with a frown. "Go away?" she said; "why? It is just beginning to be exciting here."

"Besides," she added crossly, "do you think I would go away with you? Every one would laugh at us. Just take a look at yourself; do you think you are handsome in that ridiculous jacket?"

"I know I am not exactly handsome," said Mr. Aristotle unhappily, "but I am tough and well made, and I shall last longer than you."

"What do I care?" replied his wife heatedly. "I want a little gaiety. Just leave me alone; that's all you have to do."

Mr. Aristotle wrung his hands. "You could be gay with me," he cried. "We could go walking in England."

"My," said Anabelle Lee, "that would be fun, wouldn't it. No—I want to dance and

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play. I want to enjoy myself. I should like to have a love affair."

"Love affair?" croaked Mr. Aristotle, "love affair? Do you mean to say you would be unfaithful to me?"

"Perhaps I would," replied his wife serenely. And she gazed at the ceiling with parted lips and a dreamy look.

Mr. Aristotle shrank back against the pillow. In his mind, dark with other woes, he beheld her already gazing with a fond expression into the face of Orlando or Prince Giglio; he pictured his wife's slender body embraced by a Romeo made of wire, canvas, and glue. His heart seemed ready to burst; he could scarcely breathe; he believed that he was about to go mad, and he twisted his hands together until they cracked.

"This is what I have come to," he thought. "How can it be?" A feeling of despair

MR. ARISTOTLE'S DECISION

came over him: he seemed to be in the middle of a frightful dream. "What," he cried to himself, "can such things happen? And to me, besides?"

"No, no, I will never allow it."

All was silent: Amy May was dozing; Papa Jonas had gone to his shop, to find her a new doll. Near at hand, on the coverlet, lay a pair of shears with which Amy May had been cutting out paper dresses. With difficulty Mr. Aristotle lifted them in his hands. He looked at his wife; and his heart turned over in his breast filled with grief. "No," he thought, "you shall never be another's. You shall never gaze with a smile of longing into the face of Romeo or Orlando. If I cannot have you, at least no other man will ever fill that eye with tears of love and pain."

So saying, with a single snip of the shears,

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he cut off the shoe button, which was hanging by a thread.

“Ai,” he whispered; “ai . . .”

And he looked down in horror at his wife’s blind, blank face, still turned with an expression of surprise toward the trunk she could no longer see.

“What have you done?” she cried: “what has happened to me?”

With a wild cry Mr. Aristotle leaped from the bed and stumbled toward the window. “Never mind what I’ve done,” he shouted. “I haven’t done anything.”

The window was open.

Climbing to the sill, he stood a moment looking down at the street. “There is nothing left now,” he thought drearily; “only rubbish . . .”

Groaning, he launched himself into space. Without wings he walked steeply down-

MR. ARISTOTLE'S DECISION

ward through the air. An urchin playing marbles in the gutter picked him up. The cotton vest had saved his ribs, but everything else was broken.

Back in the room at No. 12 Barrow Street, Anabelle Lee lay whimpering on the pillow. "Mr. A," she sobbed: "Mr. A, where are you? I don't see any more. Please come back."

XXI

A LETTER FROM AMY MAY

IN June the Reverend Dr. Twine's garden was quiet and warm. The grass which bordered the square walk had grown long, and was all the more fragrant for the fact that it would be brown in July. The birds, whose nests were built in April, had flown away; and a drowsy silence enveloped the garden between the red and yellow brick houses over whose roofs the sky was shining with light.

Seated on a bench in the sun, Papa Jonas was reading aloud to the Reverend Dr. Twine a letter he had received from Amy May. She had dictated it to her mother,

A LETTER FROM AMY MAY

who had set it down in her own curly handwriting.

“Dear Papa Jonas:

“I am fine, how are you? How is Mr. Moses and the Reverend Twine? We are living in a little house on a hill, with a eucalyptus tree in front of it, and a porch, and roses. The sky is blue all the time, and we can see the ocean. I have been bathing. Christopher Lane teaches me to swim with one foot on the ground under the water. How is Tibby, dear Papa Jonas, and Mr. Aristotle’s sister? Anabelle Lee is fine, and so is Mr. Romeo. She has two new eyes made out of blue beads. Mother sewed them on while we were in the train. And she has a little coral necklace Christopher Lane bought for her. She sends you her love, and Mr. Romeo sends his love. I take

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them both swimming. Anabelle Lee doesn't swim very well, but Mr. Romeo floats around like a boat. Mother does the cooking, and Christopher Lane is writing a book. There's the sweetest smell in the air all the time, like flowers and oranges. I wish you were here, dear Papa Jonas, Love and kisses,

“AMY MAY.”

Papa Jonas smiled and put the letter back into the envelope. “I have also had a letter from Mrs. Holly,” he said, “or rather I should say from Mrs. Lane. The theatre is doing very well, and I conclude that she is happy. As for Christopher, I have no doubt that he longs for the east, in which case he too is happy, in his own way.”

“And you?” asked the Reverend Dr. Twine gently.

A LETTER FROM AMY MAY

Papa Jonas sighed. "When one gets to be my age," he said, "one lives rather in the lives of others than in one's own. I have Mr. Moses, but he is quiet, like me. Some day I shall close my theatre here, and join my friends in the west. It is proper for an old man to follow the descending sun."

He looked up at the windows of his workshop, whose dusty panes seemed black as water in the sunlight. "To tell you the truth," he said, "I am a little tired of my puppets, Doctor Twine. I am tired of a world made out of wood and canvas. Sometimes it seems to me that Mr. Aristotle had more life in him than I. He did not move as I meant him to, and he ended badly; I do not even say that his life gave him any joy. Yet he knew what it is to suffer and to love. I envy him his boldness, for it was not expected of him."

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Dr. Twine sighed. "It is true," he said; "I know what you mean, Papa Jonas. We have each our workshop; sometimes life seems a little unsatisfactory to me, too. But I lean upon God, and presently I have peace again."

"Yes," said Papa Jonas, "peace comes again. We must remember what we are—you the vicar of God, I the puppet master. You must lean upon God, as you say: and I must stick to my strings. Then after a while it will be all right again."

He arose, and moved toward the house. "I must get back to my work," he said. "There are still a few things to do for Mr. Moses. He does not act so well as Mr. Aristotle. However, one must make the best of what one has."

He stood still for a moment, looking about him at the garden with its vines and

A LETTER FROM AMY MAY

its flowers. "Yes," he said slowly, "one must make the best of what one has."

And he went back into the house.

THE END

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